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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
Up Against the Stone Wall
Martin Michaelson

COUNTERREVOLUTION IN MATH/GREGOR W. PINNEY

Gene Lyons
TRYING OUT THE FICTION COLLECTIVE

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LETTERS

counterweight

New York City
Lawrence Alloway's generally favorable comments on the Whitney Counterweight in the Feb. 5th and Mar. 19th issues were well timed. But two points raised in his last article of Apr. 2 need further elucidation.

One is the implication that Third World artists were still not sufficiently represented. In fact, twenty of the ninety-three artists shown were Third World artists. One of our most fundamental desires was to correct the inequities of Third World representation in broad national shows. . . .

As far as the quota system Alloway mentions is concerned, the selection process was actually a tour de force that was thought to be an impossibility in a democratic system. Surprisingly, it worked, and rather well at that, without sacrificing the quality of the work. The fact that the outcome came close to the position of what a quota system might predefine still puts one in a position of having to make an aesthetic decision about the work.

After much discussion and debate, it was decided that it was essential that the artists who initiated the show be represented by their works so that the public could become aware of the personal vision that sparked this unique exhibition.

Alloway charges that the Counterweight organizers relied on allegiance to friends, whereas the selection committee members were largely unknown to one another; each had only one vote, with a minimum of four yes votes required for selection. . . .

Bill Rabinovitch
Director, Rabinovitch Gallery

New York City
I don't feel that Mr. Rabinovitch has refuted my criticisms. What he seems to do is repeat them, but with a sunny inflection. It is all very well to call a project of one's own a "tour de force," but saying so does not make it so. The next Counterweight could be run more rationally, as I said.

Lawrence Alloway

no 'trade-off'

Mishawaka, Ind.
I must disagree with B.J. Widick's conclusions in "Emancipation from Meany: New Life for the Unions" [*The Nation*, Mar. 26]. For example, sheer economic necessity impels the "progressive" UAW leadership to take stands on issues such as the B-1 bomber and transportation policy strikingly similar to those of AFL-CIO and corporate hierarchies. I do not intend an attack on the unions but rather want to suggest that capitalism's anti-social and assimilative power is so great as to render traditional pressure group opposition virtually impotent. Until we as a nation realize that every individual has an inalienable right to humane employment, that there can be no "trade-off" between the environment and the economy (a contradiction in terms), and that jobs manufacturing instruments of death are not better than no jobs at all will the labor movement be able effectively to challenge corporate hegemony, whatever the "Socialist" intentions of its leadership.

Mark Nicolini

The editors welcome letters from readers but regret that space limitations often prevent publication of those of more than 250 words.

EDITORIALS

Back to the Shop

President Carter returned from Europe to face a Congress that is restless and ready to snarl. He seems to have done all right on his first trip abroad, charming the multitudes with his campaigning ways and apparently being more open to the views of the allies than any of his predecessors since Kennedy. Jonathan Steele, writing in *The Manchester Guardian* before Mr. Carter arrived in London, asked whether he would succumb to the great temptation of "unilateralism," the treating of allies "like some toothless Congress, an irritating and parochial group which, unlike Congress, cannot vote."

Perhaps it was Carter's "trilateral" bent that gentled the normal domineering of American Presidents when they deal with allies. At least the leaders of the advanced industrial powers have had a good look at the new man from Washington and vice versa. It will be a while before we know what, if any, decisions were really made in London and whether they lead in the right direction.

That direction is surely toward re-energizing the individual economies, all of which suffer from some kind of crippling distortion, all afflicted with some combination of inflation and unemployment that is far from healthy. It cannot be done without profound changes of a structural kind, and the vague signals from the summit fail to transmit that kind of will. It was a very conventional message that Carter brought to the allies.

What the real Congress, the fanged one Carter must deal with every day, seems to have decided is that he really is the "fiscal conservative" he always said he was. Unconventional in many ways but, as his friend Bert Lance of the Office of Management and Budget keeps telling us, "he doesn't want to spend a dime he doesn't have to." What that means is no new programs. It also means little progress toward solving the problems of this society, though Carter would say they can be handled by readjusting the present machinery.

Congress is beginning to doubt that, and not just the liberals. True, Senator McGovern, now president of the ADA, had some rather sharp things to say about Carter's promises (large) and his performance (small) at that organization's annual meeting ("tinkling symbols" . . . "business appeasement"). But Congress is a $1 billion machine for making new laws and tinkering with old ones. It is programmatic to the core and the slogan "no new programs" will chill it.

Carter, by his actions and inaction, has certainly earned the "business confidence" he has sought. At least he should have earned it, and it is now up to the corporations to show what they can produce, given that "confidence." Based on past performance and present structures, it is most unlikely that they will deliver what Carter has a right to hope for.

What then, or even before the confidence dividend has been paid by industry? Congress, which is already whittling at the energy proposals, which is restive in high places about the Social Security tax scheme, which worries about unemployment and the balanced-budget aim,

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will start putting forward more aggressive plans of its own, ones more harmonious with the platform on which Carter ran. It begins to look as if the veto phase of Congress-White House relations in any new administration will begin earlier than usual. It is that prospect, if not yet that reality, that Carter has come home to face.

Dirty Linen Sale

Among the things Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger have in common is that their experiences and memories are for sale. They are both busy cashing in on their lives as "public servants." On the day before the first Nixon-Frost show, Kissinger spoke to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce at its annual meeting in Washington. *The Washington Post* reports that the former Secretary of State did that turn for $5,000, bargained down a bit from the $7,500 he had asked for a twenty-minute speech plus questions and answers from three TV men. Of course that sum is a minor fraction of what his former boss was earning on the tube, but then television magnifies audience and therefore money. Kissinger will have a chance to catch up with Nixon later on in the money game. He is a more popular personality than Nixon; the only thing he lacks as a marketable celebrity is a spectacular "fall" from the heights of power—the pathetic dimension, too mean to be tragic.

The self-exploitation and bad taste of these performances are apt to distract the public from the substance of what these men are saying, but it is worth noting. Kissinger, for example, said at that Chamber of Commerce session that "It is absolutely absurd for the Vietnamese to say they have a right to U.S. economic aid." With his well-known humor, he added that he would put the Vietnamese claim on American resources "in alphabetical order"—V, for him, is Very Far Off, If Ever.

That view is not only morally despicable but, as Gareth Porter convincingly demonstrated in these pages ("The Broken Promise to Hanoi," April 30), it violates a written agreement Kissinger made with the North Vietnamese in early 1973. In January of that year, Porter wrote, "Kissinger negotiated an agreement to provide a major reconstruction aid program with no political strings attached as part of the Paris Agreement, and then violated that agreement by insisting on a political condition which Hanoi could not have fulfilled even if it had wanted to."

The agreed-upon figure was $3.25 billion. The political condition he later demanded was a Cambodian cease-fire. (If proof were needed for the proposition that Hanoi could not deliver that Cambodian cease-fire, it is provided by the utterly different political ways the Hanoi and Phnom Penh regimes have gone since their victories.)

There was even a letter from President Nixon underpinning the Paris Agreement by pledging American reconstruction aid "without any political conditions." But neither that nor Kissinger's own private admission that Hanoi could not control the fiercely independent Khmer Rouge stopped him from reneging. Later the excuse would be that the Communist counteroffensive of 1974-75, ending in the collapse of the Thieu government and victory for Hanoi, rendered this American commitment null and

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void. But, as Porter wrote, "the sequence of events was the opposite. Kissinger's refusal to keep his end of the bargain . . . led ultimately to the drive that brought Saigon's collapse."

In all of this devious and fateful work Kissinger was Richard Nixon's faithful servant when he was not the actual leader, however well he concealed that domination with the manners of a courtier. Beneath the fawning lay a genuine contempt for Nixon, as a forthcoming book by Roger Morris, a former Kissinger associate on the National Security Council staff, clearly shows. A few months after he became Nixon's National Security Adviser he was sneering at him as, among other things, "my drunken friend."

In the second Nixon-Frost extravaganza, the ex-boss hits back a bit, picturing Kissinger as less gutsy than himself on little matters like the bombing of Cambodia, and even questioning whether his chief aide had read enough of the Old Testament to know the story of Lot's wife turning into a pillar of salt because she looked back at the burning city. (The moral aptness of the reference, because of all that bombing in Indochina, surely never occurred to Nixon.)

Scads of money are extracting these glimpses of the past from Nixon and Kissinger. Gerald Ford will join the troupe in a few months with his first NBC special, on the President as Commander in Chief—the fiasco of the *Mayagüez* operation, incredibly, is his chosen illustration. Nothing will stop these "public servants" from merchandising cleaned-up versions of their records. But they should know that the public will see through their self-serving yarns even before the historians have at them.

Reluctant Relations

Speaking of the normalization of relations with Vietnam, which President Carter proclaims as a goal, it is astonishing how obstacles pile up. Carter himself has said he is against "reparations," a curious term to use in the context suggested by the editorial above. And Congress buried its head deep in the sand when the House, after a few minutes of debate, passed an amendment forbidding the State Department to use any of its funds even to discuss the aid question.

As Richard Holbrooke, the Assistant Secretary of State who is charged with normalizing relations, told the House Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee, that would make it impossible for him to sit in the same room as Hanoi's negotiators, since they keep bringing up what they call ways "to heal the wounds of war." Holbrooke informed the subcommittee that he has told the Vietnamese that present laws forbid U.S. assistance to their country, that the still-missing Nixon letter pledging postwar aid is "ancient history," that he will not negotiate any secret arrangements with them, and that he will keep Congress informed of the way the talks go. They seem puzzled by that, he indicated, given the duplicitous clouds in which Kissinger wrapped himself. "It's not the way they've been used to conducting negotiations with our country," he said with dry precision.

What Carter has said we would do starts with two negatives—we will stop blocking Vietnam's admission to the U.N. and, once the two countries have exchanged ambassadors, we will drop the trade embargo. The Vietnamese promise to go on looking for the remains of the hundreds of Americans still listed as missing in action.

The slow process of adjustment to reality has at least started. Carter told his March 24th press conference, "I don't feel that we have, that we owe, a debt. . . ." Many Americans feel that we owe that ravaged country a debt we can never repay. But at least Carter, whatever his words, has begun to act as if Vietnam exists in the real world, as against the cloudland Congress still prefers.

Perjury Will Out

Someone in the FBI has been lying. In fact, quite a few agents seem to have been doing so. The proof of that charge is that they seem to have been saying different things to the grand jury that is looking into their operations against "radical" groups.

In the good old days of J.E. Hoover, all would not only have been forgiven but medals for heroic service to the national security would have been passed out to the perjurers. Any man with a scruple about the break-ins, tappings, buggings and mail openings would have been given a one-way ticket to Butte, the FBI's gulag.

But those days seem to be gone, if not forever at least for now. A former supervisor in the bureau's New York City office has been indicted and now, wondrous to relate, *The New York Times* (May 10) tells us that the present chief of that office is in danger of indictment for lying under oath before the grand jury. That, says the *Times*, is the recommendation to the Attorney General by the criminal section of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division in re J. Wallace LaPrade.

The grand jury has been looking into the bureau's activities in pursuit of "fugitive radicals" between 1971 and 1973. It seems to have uncovered a chain of command on these illegal activities that bypassed the local agent in charge, wound its devious way through "internal security" channels and ended up on the desk of the FBI's second-in-command in Washington. That high-ranking officer, Mark Felt during the period in question, is said to have authorized the outrageous and illegal acts that are the basis for the indictments, proposed and in prospect.

Griffin Bell is now thoroughly on the spot. As Attorney General he has the power to quash the proposed prosecution for perjury of the chief of the FBI's largest office and of his former subordinate for obstruction of justice. He has listened to anguished pleas from FBI Director Clarence Kelley about bureau "morale" if the lawbreakers are prosecuted (and has returned the cold reply that the law can take no account of morale). He has seen 300 FBI agents silently demonstrate on the courthouse steps against the prosecution of a former agent. He has had to listen to the FBI's one good argument—that the CIA, at least equally culpable, is being spared. It is small comfort to the FBI that their cousins in espionage can hide behind "national security" and are better at the arts of blackmail (hence the failure to indict former CIA Director Richard Helms for lying to Congress).

It may be that, in this sense, the FBI is being treated unfairly. The victims of its spying and harassment will

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shed no tears of sympathy, nor should the public. The lawbreakers of the law-enforcement world should be dealt with like any other criminals. It is strange that agents of the FBI must be taught at the bar of justice what every child learns in grade school.

Ambassadors Are No Joke

The relations of the United States with the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg have for a generation successively depended on the skills, tact, enterprise and wiles of a party giver, the wife of a New York department store owner, a Texas art collector and a parking-lot magnate. Since this small but proud national entity had no great need for the skills embodied in this series of Presidential emissaries, its government began to note that they all had one thing in common: Money. That, in large quantities, plus a generous disposition toward the U.S. party in office.

Now, it seems, the Duchy has had enough of the "Call Me Madam" treatment. It has asked for, and been granted relief from its old role as a feather in the cap for rich Americans with an itch for the nearest thing to a title that this Republic possesses, "Mister Ambassador" or "Madam Ambassadress," as the case may have been. Luxembourg passed the word, diplomatically of course, that it would rather have as the President's representative a plain old professional, however drab, from the ranks of the Foreign Service.

A question of national dignity was involved for this quite serious vest-pocket country—population only 360,000, but an industrial beehive of a nation. The Luxembourgeois were quite right. It diminished them to be the repository of rich amateur diplomats who really felt they should have been given a bigger plum and therefore looked down on their hosts. And so, with an assist from Senator Pell of Rhode Island, Luxembourg has been granted its wish and apparently will receive a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, James G. Lowenstein, as United States Ambassador.

President Carter's ambassadorial appointments have included some very good and interesting ones and at least one awful one (William H. Sullivan to Iran, as we noted in our issue of April 30). Kingman Brewster, president of Yale, to London, and Robert Goheen, former president of Princeton, to India, are particularly well-fitted for those posts by character and background. Those two should be contrasted with the Nixon-Ford emissaries—the rich and crude Walter Annenberg at the Court of St. James, the arrogantly patronizing Daniel Patrick Moynihan and the bumbling William Saxbe in New Delhi. Gov. Patrick Lucey of Wisconsin is an interesting choice for Mexico. Paris, long one of the principal political payoff posts, will apparently go to a career diplomat, Arthur A. Hartman, who for three years has been the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs.

In these days of instant communications, summitry and routine interception of messages even among friends there are limits to what an ambassador can do. They spend a good deal of their time presiding over the bits of the Washington bureaucracy, especially of intelligence, which are implanted overseas. But bright and forceful ambassadors with the nerve to argue with the President, and nothing to lose by doing so because they have made their careers elsewhere, can still have more than a symbolically decorative function.

Luxembourg, London, Paris, New Delhi and Mexico City should be pleased to receive President Carter's representatives. As for what the dangerously unstable Shah thinks of William H. Sullivan, we ought to be spared that worry. The Senate should make the appointment academic, so to speak, by rejecting that tainted operative of the intelligence establishment.

Unruh to the Rescue

A while back, some desperate Republican legislators in Sacramento invited Jesse M. Unruh, State Treasurer, former Speaker of the Assembly and one-time Democratic candidate for Governor, to tell them how to revitalize their party. In the spirit of ecumenical amity, Unruh met with them for an hour and made a number of pertinent suggestions. In essence, he said that the Democrats had become a legislator-based party, while the Republicans had allowed themselves to become an executive-based party. The Democrats thus gain a decided advantage, for their orientation insures continuity and builds support for the party at the grass roots. In the last decade, Unruh noted, the GOP had lost 800 legislative seats throughout the country. He also suggested that the party should try to find some new allies, particularly in labor circles and among Chicano voters, and to preempt a few major Democratic issues. If the Republicans needed tactical advice from the other party, they picked the right person to consult. Unruh is a classic example of the expert on governmental problems and political tactics and organization who never makes it to the top politically because he is basically a technician rather than a candidate. But why did he consent to offer the opposition advice? Because he believes in the two-party system, fears there is "some possibility" that the Republican Party may die, and feels that top-heavy majorities are bad for the country and for the majority parties themselves.

Still another suggestion might be offered—namely, that liberal and other Republicans seek to regain control of the party or, more precisely, to balance the power of the Right which today, because of superior organization and energy, exerts an influence out of relation to its actual strength. Since 1960, the liberal Republicans have been handicapped by the Rockefeller connection; they couldn't shake him off nor would he actually lead. Taking advantage of the resulting impotence, the Right moved in, captured the nomination for Goldwater and has been the dominant organized force in the party to this day. Last December the Reaganites began staging a series of unpublicized regional meetings—in Kansas City, Chicago, Atlanta and Phoenix—to keep his organization intact and to carry on the vendetta against liberal Republicans which dates from the Cow Palace convention. At the same time, Citizens for the Republic, a spinoff of the 1976 Citizens for Reagan, was launched with approximately $1 million in leftover Presidential campaign funds. It is now directing a series of nationwide direct mail solicitations, the first of which is said to have netted $80,000. Reagan will soon embark on a series of political discussions over non-

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network TV stations in three markets, Los Angeles, Houston and Miami. Citizens for the Republic, whatever one may think of its programs and objectives, is well-heeled, well-organized and intelligently directed. Close attention is being paid to filling positions of power in the party with Reagan supporters. As one of them put it recently, "the cause goes on." Yes, indeed: on and on and on.

Meanwhile, what are other Republicans doing to counter the organized power of the Right? Not much. A drive has been launched to finance liberal candidates in the 1977 and 1978 elections and funds are being solicited from Democrats (maybe Jesse Unruh will toss in a few dimes) and independents as well as Republicans. This initiative, a project of the Ripon Society, goes by the name of the New Leadership Fund. It hopes to offset the influence that Citizens for the Republic will exercise in the elections between now and 1980. The new project seems to have been conceived before the 1976 convention, but it was unable to get into full operation until quite recently. It remains to be seen how successful its fund raising will be.

On balance, the liberal Republicans do not seem to be doing very well. Former Rep. Peter Peyser (N.Y.), a lifelong Republican, has walked out of the party. Sen. Charles Mathias (Md.), is said to be reluctant to leave but is being urged to change his registration; so, too, is Rep. Charles Whalen (Ohio). Among freshmen Democratic Senators, Michigan's Donald Riegle was once a Republican, as was Nebraska's Edward Zorinsky. Evans and Novak called attention in a recent column to "a hesitant but nevertheless unmistakable exodus" of liberal Republicans. Give the Reaganites credit: they have always known that in today's mushy political environment the Right as an organized force could exert an influence out of all proportion to its numbers, if it could capture control of the Republican Party. Of course, it would like to win the Presidency as well, but influence is the name of the game.

A big conservative Center, drawing support from both parties, is being kept from moving Left by organized pressure from the Right. If the Republicans do not gain more, many more, legislative seats and governorships by 1980, the Democrats could make additional inroads on the party by gerrymandering tactics. But that would only make it easier for the Right to take complete control of the GOP. Senator Baker and others say that new Republican initiatives will emerge in the Congress, where the talent is, but thus far there have been few signs of revitalizing party action. If the trend continues, Jesse Unruh may have another landslide for the majority party to add to his list; if so, it is likely to be a victory of the conservative bipartisan Center which, in a manner of speaking, would be a qualified victory for the Right.

CAREY MCWILLIAMS

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

UP AGAINST THE STONE WALL

MARTIN MICHAELSON

Freedom of access to government information, the youngest and perhaps most precarious freedom, is, like freedom of speech, not absolute. In fact, it is so "unabsolute" that, according to Harold C. Relyea's "The Administration of the Freedom of Information Act" (a Congressional Research Service monograph), United States departments and agencies in 1975 denied some 27,300 requests lodged under that Act. And, though final figures are not yet available, it appears that considerably more than 27,000 requests were denied in 1976. Observers having even a passing interest in human rights would presumably be shocked at disclosure of an annual rate of government-ordered abridgments of speech exceeding 27,000 instances; denials on a comparable scale of the right to speak have qualified regimes as totalitarian. Why, then, is there no outcry against these rampant refusals by the government to disclose its records to the public?

To understand why the country apparently tolerates this situation, it is useful to review some history. First, the United States lacks a tradition of free access to government records. This was an element of the more broadly accomplished government secrecy which reached its zenith —more properly, its nadir—in the period that will forever be known as Watergate. Watergate drove home dramatically the extent to which the government kept its domestic and foreign operations secret. From the reformer's point of view, it was powerful medicine with which to arouse the public, dressing up as it did the banality of most government secrecy in a flood of titillating episodes. But the public was evidently more aroused by Watergate's symptom than by the secrecy disease of which it gave notice.

To suggest that the pervasive government secrecy which the Watergate disclosures intimated was purely a product of the Nixon White House does that administration too much credit. Government secrecy goes far back. Henry Steele Commager has noted the Founding Fathers' inconsistent attitudes about government openness. On the one hand, their theme was that "the people have the right to know":

> This was the reason for . . . freedom of the press; this was the logic behind Jefferson's famous statement that given a choice between government without newspapers and newspapers without a government he would choose the latter; this was the philosophy that animated that passion for education expressed by most of the Constitution makers: that without enlightenment

Martin Michaelson is a Washington lawyer who has handled many Freedom of Information Act cases. This article is based on a paper he delivered at a colloquium in honor of Prof. H.H. Wilson at Princeton University on May 3.

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about politics and information about government, democracy simply would not work.

On the other hand, Commager continues (*The New York Review of Books*, August 19, 1973), "the Constitution itself was drawn up in secret session." A strong tradition of government openness would have made most unlikely a massive secrecy scandal which implicated, in addition to the President and his advisers, the CIA, Justice Department, Defense Department, Internal Revenue Service, FBI and other units of the government.

Second, Congress was about 177 years too late in seriously addressing the problem of access to government records. When in 1966 the legislators did legislate for freedom of information in a comprehensive way, they compromised the principle, euphemistically calling limitations on disclosure "exemptions," and making them broad enough to protect massive quantities of secrets. It sometimes appeared—at least until Freedom of Information Act Amendments went into effect in 1975—that the exemptions had consumed the principle.

Third, growth of the federal bureaucracy, proliferation of government agencies, and a staggering increase in the accumulated volume of government paper made government policy on access to records itself inaccessible. For example, until last year there was no way to measure the extent to which the government refused to comply with requests for its records, and even now the data are incomplete.

Fourth—and possibly the most basic explanation of why such widespread nondisclosure of government records continues to be tolerated—many people believe that the government is so large, complex and unfathomable that access to its records would not be particularly helpful. Even the unrelenting efforts of Ralph Nader and the rise of consumerism seem to have made but small inroads on public apathy and alienation.

In light of the foregoing, it is less surprising that the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is so limited than that it exists at all. Access to government records was the doing of a relatively few conscientious souls who labored for years against dogged executive branch resistance. It happened like this:

In 1789, Congress enacted a "housekeeping" law which authorized federal agencies to set up files and maintain records. That began the problem. Eighty-five Congresses later, H.R. 2767 was introduced by Rep. John Moss (D., Calif.) to amend the ancient statute in ways that would inhibit the withholding of such files and records. The Moss law, enacted with little notice in 1958, was the product of Congressional hearings and studies begun in 1955 which established that federal agencies were hostile to requests by citizens for information. The 1958 law declared that "This section [the 'housekeeping' statute] does not authorize withholding information from the public or limiting the availability of records to the public."

Unfortunately, this well-intentioned law had very little effect. Indeed, 1972 hearings of the House Foreign Operations and Government Information Subcommittees revealed that, despite enactment of the Moss law fourteen years earlier, federal agencies still relied on the 1789 "housekeeping" statute as authority to withhold information.

To justify their wholesale refusals to disclose records, federal agencies also routinely cited the gigantic loopholes in the Administrative Procedure Act of 1946. Although the law purported to state a policy of disclosure, its Section 3 authorized the agencies to keep information secret if "held confidential for good cause found," or where secrecy was in "the public interest," or where the information had a bearing on "any matter relating solely to the internal management of an agency." In the unlikely event that the requested information could not be made to fit any of those nebulous categories, an agency was required to furnish it only to "persons properly and directly concerned." In practice, Section 3 was constrained as a charter for government secrecy.

Thus, it became evident in the early 1960s that a law more potent than the 1946 and 1958 statutes was needed to overcome executive branch resistance to disclosure. Congress considered numerous proposals, but passed none until the 1966 Freedom of Information Act. That landmark bill, although complicated and riddled with exceptions, amended the 1946 statute to establish the principle that "any person" was entitled to access to government records without having to demonstrate a need or even a reason. Most important, the 1966 Act provided that the burden of justifying a refusal was on the agency; the requester no longer had to prove his right to the information.

Shifting the burden of proof had practical litigation effects, with which lawyers are familiar. But litigation is an inefficient tool with which to achieve broad compliance with a social policy, and the shift had a more basic significance. The right of access to government information now took on an essential characteristic that the constitutional freedoms enjoy: the onus is on the government to show that a recognized freedom should be denied in a particular case, not on the citizen to show entitlement to it.

The 1966 Act was debated in and passed by Congress with almost no support from the executive branch. Not a single executive branch spokesman endorsed the bill while it was under consideration, and President Johnson's view of its merits was uncertain until he signed it into law. Moreover, the Executive's glowing praise of the Act was belied by persistent obstruction of its implementation. Pen in hand on July 4, 1966 (the law went into effect one year later), President Johnson orated: "I signed this measure with a deep sense of pride that the United States is an open society in which the people's right to know is cherished and guarded." In a similarly high-sounding endorsement, Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark, writing his June 1967 explanatory memorandum on the Act to the agencies of government, asserted that "disclosure is a transcendent goal." Other government officials echoed the rhetorical theme.

Perhaps the agencies took Ramsey Clark too literally. In any event, they succeeded so well in transcending the goal that they plainly missed it. A House Government Operations Committee report of 1972 cited six major problem areas in implementation of the Act, which I summarize:

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(*1*) Bureaucratic delays in responding to information requests were grossly excessive. Initial response delays average thirty-three days, and major agencies took an average of fifty days or more to process agency reviews of initial decisions.

(*2*) Agencies charged exorbitantly for records, as a device to withhold information.

(*3*) The judicial remedy for improper denial of access was cumbersome, costly and time-consuming, frustrating vindication of rights under the Act.

(*4*) Key decisions at federal agencies as to whether information would be disclosed were made by political appointees.

(*5*) News media personnel, often stymied by bureaucratic delays, took inadequate advantage of access rights.

(*6*) In too many cases, information was withheld, overclassified or otherwise hidden from the public to avoid disclosure of administrative mistakes, waste of funds, or politically embarrassing facts.

Some noteworthy progress in honoring the principle of freedom of information was made by the courts after 1966, but the case-by-case approach prescribed by the 1966 law was slow and difficult in the early years. For example, only eight cases were decided in 1970, twenty in 1971, twenty-eight in 1972 and sixteen in 1973. Litigants seeking access were challenged by the full legal resources of the U.S. Government, which almost invariably appealed lower court decisions that upheld disclosure. In addition, persons seeking disclosure usually had to pay substantial legal fees, even when they won their cases. Furthermore, the Supreme Court, out of what history is likely to judge an excessive deference to the Executive, held in *Environmental Protection Agency* v. *Mink,* 410 U.S. 73 (1973), that the Executive's decision to classify a document secret was virtually unreviewable; to determine whether classification of a document was proper, the courts could look no further than to the self-serving affidavits of the executive branch officials who had classified it. The judiciary thus barred itself from examining classified documents in FOIA cases.

Added to these off-putting factors was the inordinate complexity of the 1966 Act, which seemed even to lawyers to resemble the proverbial committee-drawn sketch of a horse. In fact, there had been more than one committee. Searching inquiry was required just to figure out what Congress had in mind. A 1968 Fordham *Law Review* article commented that the legislative history of the 1966 Act "is even more confusing than the Act itself."

It must be said that it was genuinely difficult to determine what information should properly be withheld under the Act's exemptions. There was and is no touchstone to determine which government records comprise bona fide private proprietary information (disclosure of which would be anti-competitive), or which investigative material should not be made public, or which intra-agency memos are of a privileged nature, or which secrets are actually necessary to the national security, to cite only a few illustrations. Hard cases, it is said, make bad law, and many of the early FOIA cases were certainly hard.

All these difficulties—cost, delay, statutory ambiguity, lack of precedent, uncertainty of outcome and, above all, agency hostility—often confronted the unwary requester of government documents head-on. In a very sober understatement, Rep. William Moorhead (D., Pa.), reviewing application of the Act during its first seven years, concluded that "No law is self-enforcing, least of all a law designed to help the citizen in a contest with the government." One study of 2,200 instances in which access to government documents had been denied found that fewer than 300 appeals were taken within the denying agencies, and in only about 100 of these instances did the disappointed individual go to court. The odds were too great. The bureaucracy was, for the most part, in charge of the outcome.

Changes to the 1966 Act were necessary if freedom of information was to survive as much more than a boast. Congress again held hearings, and amendments were proposed in the House and Senate. Again, not a single executive branch representative testified in support. Indeed, some departments and agencies claimed, in effect, that their decisions on disclosure questions were so intelligent that review outside the agency would hardly be appropriate. For example, the acting general counsel of the Defense Department argued in a February 20, 1974 letter to the chairman of the House Government Operations Committee that

> No system of security classification can work satisfactorily if judges are going to substitute their interpretations of what should be given a security classification for those of the government officials responsible for the program requiring classification.

The generals, in short, held themselves unaccountable to the federal judiciary.

Former Atty. Gen. Elliot Richardson defined the obstacle to disclosure in his testimony before the Senate Administrative Practice and Procedure Subcommittee. "The problem," he said, "in affording the public more access to official information is not statutory but administrative. . . . The real need . . . is to improve compliance." Richardson was largely right, but how, without legislating, could Congress obtain "improved compliance" from an executive branch that had repeatedly demonstrated disinclination to comply? Legislation was the only answer.

However, it is difficult for Congress to legislate over executive branch opposition. The Ford administration, torn between its desire to appear cleansed of its predecessor's disastrous secrecy and its fear of too much public access, in the end chose secrecy. As President Ford's former press secretary, Jerald terHorst, recounted it (*The Washington Star-News*, November 1, 1974):

> Despite the grace period that the Congressional managers of the bill extended to Ford as a personal courtesy, no serious efforts to work out a compromise were made by the Justice Department, the FBI, the Domestic Council or other administration agencies whose leaders supposedly were now responsive to Ford.
>
> It amounted to stonewalling, some actually preferring that Congress pass a bill which Ford would veto. . . . And Ford . . . finally did just that. . . .

Fortunately, the political environment in Congress in

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November 1974, was ideal for disclosure legislation, and Congress overrode Ford's veto of the 1974 Amendments to the 1966 Act. On the same day, the Senate passed the Privacy Act of 1974, another long-overdue measure, which entitles individuals to inspect and correct many kinds of government records about themselves. The Senators were responding to Congressional review of the extent to which the government collects personal data on citizens. Studies by the Senate Subcommittee on Congressional Rights had revealed that, in 1971-73, the federal government maintained 858 data banks, containing 1.246 *billion* files on individuals.

The 1974 Freedom of Information Amendments, which became effective in February 1975, went a long way to reduce many of the obstacles to access to government records. They required agencies to publish comprehensive indexes on their publicly available records; imposed a ten-day limit on initial agency responses to information requests; required that agency fees for locating and copying records be uniform and moderate; authorized Civil Service Commission disciplinary proceedings against federal employees who capriciously or arbitrarily denied information requests; empowered the courts to inspect withheld documents *in camera,* thus overturning the Supreme Court's decision in *E.P.A.* v. *Mink,* and shortened the government's time for answering complaints brought into court. They also directed the courts to expedite decision of FOIA cases; provided for recovery of attorney fees by information requesters who prevail in litigation; prohibited agencies from withholding entire documents only parts of which are exempt, by requiring disclosure of all "reasonably segregable" nonexempt portions; ordered each agency to report to Congress annually its experience under the Act, and liberalized the Act's exemptions relating to law-enforcement investigatory records and classified documents.

The urgency of improving access to needlessly classified documents was particularly great. A Princeton historian, Theodore Draper, had aptly described the security classification practices of the executive branch as "shot through with duplicity, hypocrisy and favoritism" (*The New York Times Magazine,* February 4, 1973). Another student of excessive security classification practices, William Florence, advised Congress that abuse of security classification was by no means limited to the government—it had polluted industry. As of July 1974, he reported, the Defense Department was maintaining industrial-facility security clearances at 1,293 facilities for Top Secret work, and 9,688 facilities for Secret work. Thus, industry classified and maintained "many millions of documents" prepared at public expense, and often needlessly held them secret. Here are a few examples of improper and excessive executive branch classification of documents in this period:

> A note written by one of the Chiefs of Staff stated that too many papers were being classified as Top Secret. The note itself was classified Top Secret.
>
> The external configuration of missiles which were standing on launch pads at Cape Canaveral where the public could plainly see them was classified Confidential.
>
> Eleven documents classified Top Secret were introduced into evidence, and placed in the public file, during the four-month Pentagon Papers trial in 1973. Notwithstanding that the public had four months of unlimited access to the documents, the Defense and State Departments refused to remove the Top Secret classifications.
>
> Compilations of unclassified, publicly available information, such as news clippings and bibliographies, were routinely classified.

On the basis of its review of such abuses, the House Government Operations Committee concluded that existing security classification practices had "spawned a strangling mass of classified documents that finally weakened and threatened a breakdown of the entire system." The Amendments sought to reverse this trend. After all, as Sen. Jacob Javits (R., N.Y.) remarked during floor debate, "it is not providence on Mount Sinai that stamps a document secret or top secret but a lot of boys and girls just like us who have all their own hang-ups."

Whether the purposes of the Freedom of Information Amendments will be achieved is not yet known. It is clear that the volume of requests has increased dramatically. For example, FBI Director Clarence Kelley, bemoaning the "avalanche" of FOIA requests to his agency, recently felt constrained, albeit reluctantly, to assign 400 FBI agents to process a backlog of requests requiring review of "nearly 10 million pages" of FBI records (Anthony Marro, *The New York Times,* March 18). However, it is far from clear that executive branch resistance to disclosure has abated. Available data are not easy to interpret. Thus, while the Justice and Defense Departments reported granting 84 and 86 percent, respectively, of the FOIA requests made to them in 1975, there is no way to know how many of these requests sought truly innocuous material, such as printed brochures, regulations and the like. What is known is that the Defense Department denied 5,197 requests in 1975 and 6,973 in 1976. Anyone who has dealt with them can testify that the gentlemen in the Pentagon do not resolve close questions in favor of information seekers.

Available reports on 1976 agency implementation of the Act are puzzling and troubling in many respects. The CIA's report to Congress on its 1976 FOIA activities attempts to excuse the agency's massive backlog of requests by stating that "the CIA has no central file or index to its record holdings" and that it takes the CIA "2-3 days to retrieve inactive records." Are these statements credible in light of a U.S. intelligence budget said to approximate $6 billion? The Federal Trade Commission, one of the most pious of federal agencies in its proclaimed zeal to protect the public, saw fit to deny some 690 FOIA requests in 1976. The National Science Foundation, guardian of the principle that knowledge is enlightenment, denied thirty-four requests.

Still, there are signs of progress. The CIA also states that in 1976 its personnel spent 181,995 man-hours processing Freedom of Information and Privacy Act requests, and mandatory classification reviews under Executive Order 11652. FOIA requests are increasingly being directed to obscure, as well as prominent, government

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units. Even the little American Battle Monuments Commission got its share in 1976 and the Marine Mammal Commission—whatever that is—also duly reported its FOIA compliance policy and practices.

Perhaps the substantial rate and number of current denials of FOIA requests are not as salient as the unquestionably large rate and number of disclosures. The pessimist, it is said, describes the glass as half-empty, the optimist as half-full. However, skepticism of a real executive branch commitment to the disclosure principle seems warranted in light of its resistant attitude dating back to the earliest days of freedom of information. Analysts should remember that Congress had very good cause to shift to the government the burden of justifying nondisclosure. Vigilant Congressional oversight, and increased media attention, are the main guarantees the people have that Congress' intent will not be thwarted once again.

A vital freedom of information procedure is burdensome to all involved; it is expensive and fragile. Compliance must be constantly monitored if the freedom is not to slip away. Whether it is worth the effort is always open to debate. And yet, the belief that useful public debate itself depends on this freedom is perhaps the best argument for its indispensability. At bottom, this freedom, like all others, rests on *a priori* values. As Prof. Thomas Emerson said in *The System of Freedom of Expression,* "The validity of [these] premises has never been proved or disproved, and probably could not be." However, the unprovable, but I think undeniable, assumptions which underlie freedom of information have been described this way in Congress:

> Information is essential to knowledge—and knowledge is the basis for political power. Under our government system, maximum access to information must, therefore, always reside firmly in the hands of the American people. □

SOUTH AFRICAN MUZZLE

VORSTER BULLIES THE PRESS

ANDREW SILK

Cape Town

The South African Government in March withdrew a bill to put the press under state control. At 6:30 P.M., the evening before the legislation was to undergo its second reading—at which time the principle would have been accepted—Prime Minister John Vorster told a surprised Parliament that the country's newspapers would have a year to discipline themselves, at which time the law would be reconsidered. In its place, a government press secretariat has been established to jawbone publishers and editors.

The law, if it is pushed through next year, enables the government to fine individual journalists and newspapers heavily and to suspend publication indefinitely. The code that would have to be observed is a parody of journalistic ethics and practices. Nothing could be printed that "would harm the name of South Africa abroad." All news would have to be displayed in its "appropriate" context. All sources would have to be identified, and records kept of men and women "mainly responsible" for every article appearing in the paper. Any publication could also be fined or closed for not showing "exceptional care" in the coverage of racial news.

Further, the bill states that the press council which would administer the code could not be attacked or criticized in the press. Individual journalists refusing to testify before the council could be jailed. Newspapers or journalists could not take out insurance against possible infringements of the code. The laws would not apply to foreign newsmen, but would affect all South Africans writing for overseas publications.

During the two weeks between the tabling of the bill and its withdrawal, it appeared that the outside world was to know more about South Africa than were its citizens (as happened during the Angolan war). Many of the country's top journalists spoke of resignation or prison. While there was no serious speculation that some newspapers might simply close shop, it was unclear how the nation's most aggressive papers could continue for long without heavily censoring or dropping entirely half their copy.

Already on the books are seventy-five laws which affect the press here, and some radical critics argued that the new bill might even be beneficial, in the sense that it would remove the illusion that the press does have some real freedom. Military news, no matter how innocuous, goes through an official censor. Prison conditions cannot be exposed, except in reports of trial proceedings. Hundreds of "banned" men and women cannot be quoted at all. Nothing is supposed to be written that might cause friction between the races. There are enough laws, both hopelessly vague and astonishingly precise, to bring any paper to its knees—if the state really tried. (For example, photographs of prisons, or even prison walls, are illegal, although many are located on main roads.)

But whereas all prior legislation affects the reporting of specific stories, the new bill would subvert the institution of journalism itself. For to operate under the new code would make implicit the sanction of the state, and would go far to destroy the credibility of all journalists.

Now that the threat has been removed temporarily, there is talk that its introduction was a brinkmanship exercise whereby the government hoped to make newspaper owners clamp down harder on certain editors and

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reporters, and that it is intended to soften the blow when direct censorship may become necessary.

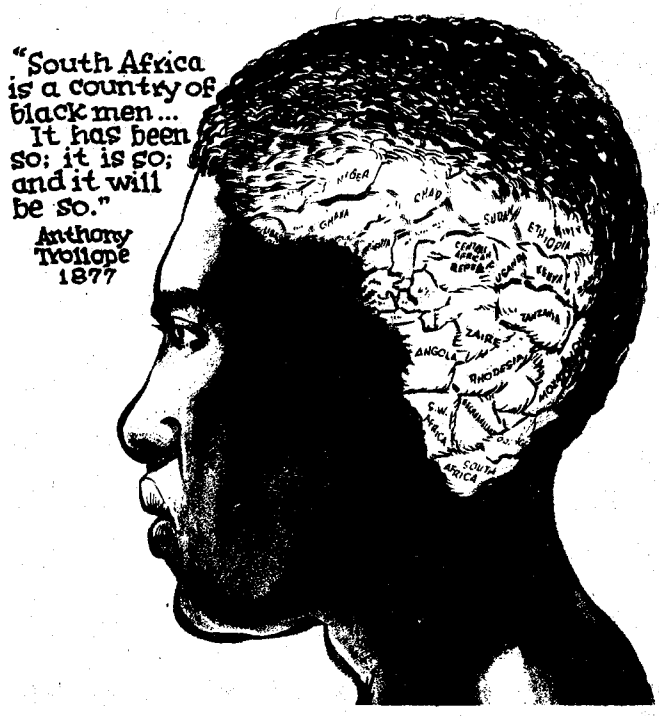
That seems plausible. Those who heard the Prime Minister's short announcement in Parliament spoke of his unusual confidence. As he walked from the house, he smiled at a crowd of newspapermen and joked, "Now, the first one of you who says I bowed under pressure will be banned." But whether or not the bill was in fact intended to be withdrawn, the maneuverings that surround it reveal clearly the tension and pressures within South Africa, as its leaders gradually prepare for war.

Attacks and restrictions on the press here are as old as Nationalist Party rule, and it often seems that most whites as well as the government have grown immune to the daily assaults and exposés of the *"verdammte Engelse pers"*—the damned English-language press. In fact, the government has freely admitted its vested interest in keeping anti-apartheid publications functioning—it is one of its few remaining selling points when it tries to peddle its image abroad. If one is a foreigner, one hears as a litany the basically accurate claim that South Africa has the freest press in Africa.

If Vorster had been interested simply in badgering his traditional enemy, there would have been no need for such a display of muscle. The English press in South Africa, though it increasingly hammers apartheid, is by external standards essentially conservative. It favors increased foreign investment, lauds the plans for an "internal settlement" in Namibia—which most of the world rejects—defends the country vigorously against harangues and resolutions in the United Nations, and is as frightened as the government about the Communist threat to southern Africa. Furthermore, its main audience, the English opposition, has been politically impotent for years.

But in the aftermath of the rioting in Soweto and so many other African townships, which began last June and continued on and off until the new year, the government has been faced with two new threats. Black journalists have become openly political and even the Afrikaans press has become a pestering and sometimes severe critic of Vorster and the Afrikaner Establishment, although it maintains basic support for apartheid and the Nationalist Party.

Black reporters were the men and women most responsible for telling the story of Soweto to their own people, South Africa's whites, and the world. They, and several white reporters who sneaked past police barriers, took great risks. Some were stoned by students and beaten up by police. Their work could be stopped only partially by the detention of fifteen men, including the whole "riot squad" of *The World*—the Johannesburg paper that is white-owned but written by and for Africans. Most were held for more than four months, until Soweto and the other townships had begun to quiet down. But the uprising and all that followed from it—trials, detentions, funerals, strikes, boycotts—transformed both *The World* and the Soweto edition of the *Rand Daily Mail* from ghetto papers that focused largely on sport, music and crime. Although under constant pressure to tone down their reports, veteran black journalists began to feel a return in spirit to



Dobbins, Boston Herald American

the early days of African journalism in the 1950s, when the liberation movements now in exile were still legal and organizing throughout the country. Circulation of these papers has jumped. Africans now make up the majority of the *Mail*'s readership. Newly aware men and women in the townships read daily, in banner headlines, of security police raids, deaths in detention, and students crossing the border to receive military training.

The transformation of the Afrikaans newspapers has been much less dramatic, evident perhaps only to those well versed in Nationalist Party politics. These papers have traditionally been at the center of the party establishment, instrumental in shaping and defining apartheid. D.F. Malan and Hendrik Verwoerd, the fathers of Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid, were in the 1920s and '30s founding editors of newspapers which they used to whip up Afrikaner identity, British hatred and fear of the black peril. According to Schalk Pienaar, the dean of Afrikaans journalists, the engineering of the "apartheid" election that brought the Nationalists to power in 1948 was accomplished largely in the offices of *Die Burger,* the Nationalist Party paper in the Cape.

In the last few years, however, some of the country's largest Afrikaans papers have begun to move. They have complained that the party is pandering to its right wing, which stands firm against even the mildest apartheid concessions, and have charged that party functionaries have grown fat and paralyzed during thirty years of power.

The criticism has sharpened since Soweto. While the papers refrained from questioning police action during the uprising, thus losing outside credibility, they have accused the Prime Minister of having developed no vision or program as a result of the destruction. They have attacked the retention of Andries Treurnicht as Deputy Minister for Bantu Affairs—the department responsible

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for running African townships—whose insistence that African students in Soweto receive some of their lessons in Afrikaans sparked the months of rioting. And recently, they have defended Andries Wassenaar, a leading Afrikaans businessman, whom Vorster denounced in Parliament for arguing that state control of large segments of the economy is ruining the country.

These attacks, because they are written in the language of the *"volk"* by intellectuals whose support the government has deemed crucial, have intensely annoyed the Prime Minister. He seems almost obsessed to keep all Afrikaners loyal to both the party and its leader, and sees any division by personal rivalries or ideological factions as a direct threat to his power. Although the public does not seem particularly stirred by the "enlightened" press, its potential ability to undercut the Prime Minister, either within Nationalist inner circles or amongst the rank and file, is at least much stronger than that of the opposition white or black press could ever be. "He is so mad at them [the Afrikaans press] I thought for a minute that we had become the good guys," said the editor of an English-language paper after an interview with Vorster a few weeks before the press bill was drafted.

The press law then appears to have been designed not so much to punish the English opposition as to prepare in advance for another Soweto, to water down the kind of news Africans are getting, and to discipline the government-supporting press. However flexibly the law might be applied, the message would be clear: as the people prepared for the coming struggle, there was no longer room for deviation.

The government, indeed, seemed anxious to show that the bill was only part of much more sweeping plans and legislation. In his New Year's message, Mr. Vorster told South Africa that it must prepare to fight with no allies. And as the bill worked its way through Parliament, Magnus Malan, director of the armed forces, told the country that it was in a transition from a prosperous society into one of survival, where certain principles of democracy could no longer be afforded. Strategies were now being formed, he said, which would enable South Africa to live indefinitely in a "total war" of low intensity.

But while the country's leaders may have decided that nothing could stop a siege of white South Africa, important segments of the white community are not yet at that point. While men have armed themselves, and most soldiers in the universal draft spend time on the borders, there is still great reluctance to shape one's whole life inside the *"laager"*—the circle of covered wagons used to defend Afrikaner *"voortrekkers"* from attacks by Zulu and other tribesmen. Many businessmen, politicians, academics, journalists and others still believe that, if the government were willing to take the risks, the fundamentals of South African life could be preserved, and that internal, essentially nonviolent change is still possible.

For many, this hope has been kept alive by the absence of press control by the state. All the elements of a police state evident here could still be seen by some as an aberration of the system, and by others as unhappily necessary to control "troublesome" elements in the society—as long as it was possible to protest against the laws, or at least to know more or less who was being affected by them. The frightening conclusion—that straight totalitarian control is inevitable—could still be avoided.

So when the bill was announced, following the breakdown of talks with the National Press Union (a body made up of owners of both English and Afrikaans papers), the important battle that broke out was not so much about what could or could not be printed, as, in Mr. Malan's terms, about whether the choice had now come between the demands of white survival and the values of prosperity.

Perhaps for the first time, the press stood in opposition together, albeit in strange ways. The *Mail* fought for its life with front-page editorials, focusing its outcry on the public's right to know and the role the press played in articulating black grievances. Ben Schoeman, a former Cabinet Minister and a managing director of one of the two Afrikaans newspaper chains, simply called the law unnecessary. "You do not use a sledgehammer to kill a flea," he said somewhat tritely. What deeply troubled the Afrikaans press was the international damage the bill might do, particularly at a time when American policy toward southern Africa was in formation and President Carter had begun to sound serious about human rights. Though whites here talk a lot of the need for their own identity, they desperately want to feel part of the West, and are not yet ready to concede that the rupture is complete.

Without this opposition of the Afrikaans papers, the government would in all probability have allowed the bill to pass. But the protest created strange anomalies. Members of parliament sit on the boards of both Afrikaans newspaper chains, as do some of the party's most influential and wealthiest supporters. In fact, Connie Mulder, the Minister of the Interior and therefore the man responsible for drafting the legislation, is on the board of Perskor, whose flagship paper, *Die Transvaler,* has been one of the most outspoken of the Afrikaans journals.

If the "internal press" had consented to being controlled, it would have meant that, despite whatever rumblings of dissent, the Afrikaner "tribe" was properly disciplined, and that it was time to find out who outside the tribe would cooperate and who must be cut off. On the other hand, if the bill had been pushed through without Afrikaner approval, it would have appeared not only that the government was getting tough with liberals but that the *volk* itself was in disarray, with its left and right hands uncoordinated.

However, precisely because the government had the power to push the bill through Parliament, it could use it as a carrot as well as a stick. In the first round of talks with the newspaper owners, it was the government that tried to persuade. When Mr. Vorster consented to resume the talks after legislation was introduced, the roles were reversed. Talks continued for three days, during which the Prime Minister was joined by the Ministers of Justice, Defence and Community Development—the three most sensitive portfolios. When agreement was finally reached, the press union issued a statement expressing the hope that a new era of cooperation between the government and the press had arrived. "Vorster took a lesson from John Ehrlichman," one journalist commented about the tem-

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porary settlement: "If you get them by the balls, their hearts and minds will follow."

While the nation's papers have not changed noticeably in the couple of weeks since the meetings, an important move in the slow mobilization for "total war" has taken place. The government, whose main objective in the last year has been the forging of white unity, has had to postpone the reckoning of the size of the *laager* and the amount of discipline the people are willing to accept inside it. At the same time, it has won new praise from the Afrikaans press, which played the central role in the negotiations. It has reassured these papers that they are still influential, and has helped seal, at least for the time being, a rift in Afrikanerdom that the bill might have provoked.

For the white opposition press, Mr. Vorster presents an unnerving dilemma. If state control had been introduced, the choices facing these publishers, journalists and editors would have been clear—to toe the new line, to resign, or to publish in defiance for as long as possible. Now both the owners—who are generally more conservative than their employees—and the journalists themselves must decide whether to write as before and hasten their own doom, or soften and narrow the confines of their attack, in the hope that for a time longer they can play some role in the country. If they choose the second course, the already wide gap between white protest and black demands will grow, making it easier to slip into the *laager* when the time comes.

Whether the government will succeed in its other aim—to quiet the black journalists and those few white ones now committed to the black cause—depends largely on the pressures put on them by their white superiors. For these men and women do not face the same dilemma. They neither want nor could get places in the *laager*. For them, the question is not whether a free press is crucial to maintain some substance of democracy—they are accustomed to totalitarian rule—but whether it can be used as a weapon in their struggle. For them, it is a question of tactics and opportunities, rather than of rights and principles.

If, however, they are given enough leeway, and in the event of a new uprising these journalists again become the center of national and international attention, the government can always bring forth the old laws and put them away again, or can threaten their white employers more seriously than ever before. Some risks do remain for the government. But at this stage, when the townships have been quiet for some months, hundreds of students are in exile or prison on criminal and political convictions, and the movement seems frustrated and divided, such risks can be taken. If the cost of white unity now is a certain measure of black protest and more damaging reports of political suppression, it can be afforded. At least for a while. □

FORT LESLEY J. McNAIR

GRAD SCHOOL FOR JUNTAS

JEFFREY STEIN

Washington

Fort Lesley J. McNair, a quiet pocket of red brick buildings around a parade field on the edge of the Potomac River, looks like a tableau for an Army at peace. A few soldiers loll in the sunshine, polishing boots and brass. Others touch up the white columns on the porches of the fort's main buildings. There is little saluting, no chanting platoons off to the rifle range.

At Fort McNair, in fact, more business suits are to be seen than uniforms. They are worn mostly by short, dark men with mustaches, walking about the post with books under their arms, talking quietly in Spanish. Late in the afternoon, these students get into their cars with the diplomatic license plates, drive out through the gates into the city traffic and head north toward Pennsylvania Avenue.

But the men are neither businessmen nor diplomats. They are Latin America's highest-ranking military officers, and they have come to Fort McNair to learn how to be the military managers of their countries. In nine months, they will have become members of one of Latin America's most exclusive military clubs: graduates of the Inter-American Defense College (IADC).

Established in October 1962, with the help of a $1 million grant from the United States, the IADC has graduated 497 students from eighteen Latin American countries. "As of last count," reads a 1976 U.S. Army periodical, "eight were currently in such positions as Minister of Defense, Commanding General of the Army, Commandant of the Navy, or Chief of Staff of the Army or Navy." The school has also compiled a list of its most famous graduates. Included are members of the ruling juntas in Latin America's most brutal regimes, among them Adm. Emilio Massera of Argentina, known as an extreme rightist even among his comrades; Gen. Gustavo Leigh of Chile, a key officer in the 1973 coup, and Gen. Jose Cardozo of Uruguay, once the cruel head of the anti-subversives board. Many other graduates are now mayors of their countries' largest cities, or ambassadors in their classmates' capitals.

At Fort McNair many of the men will also form lifelong friendships with one another and with their counterparts at the Pentagon. And it is there that they can grasp a new set of ideas, a kind of "Doctrine of National Security," an ideology that links a rationaliza-

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tion for the perpetuation of military dictatorship with Washington's strategic interests in the hemisphere. In 1977, it is the "Divine Right of Kings" rewritten with a military cast of characters.

The Inter-American Defense College grew out of the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB), and is funded by the Organization of American States, which in turn receives about two-thirds of its funding from the United States. In addition, the United States pays for the maintenance of IADC and for the personnel who administer it.

The Defense Board was set up in World War II to coordinate a common defense of the hemisphere, and external attack remains its official rationale, but in 1977 it is difficult to elicit the specific identity of the enemy. When asked "Who is the enemy?," an aide to Gen. Gordon Sumner, chairman of the IADB (the board is always chaired by an American), replied with a smile, "I couldn't tell you." Added Colombia's Naval Attaché, Capt. Alejandro Velasco, "It's so generalized, we're not planning for any [specific] enemy." U.S. Air Force Gen. Kermit C. Kaericher, director of the college (a U.S. officer is always the director), was more helpful. In a long interview, he allowed that "subversion from without" would be the principal enemy in "the consensus of opinion of about all Latin American officers here."

The fact would seem to be, however, that the "collective defense of the hemisphere," although touted by IADB-IADC brochures in World War II terms, has evolved into the organization of methods to deal with internal challenges to the power grip of Latin American military dictatorships. An exchange between Rep. Edward Koch (D., N.Y.) and Stephen Winship, director of the State Department's Office of Security Assistance, during military appropriations hearings last year aptly illustrates the U.S. position:

> *Koch:* Your position is if there is an internal threat, that that can be the basis for our providing military aid. That is to say, if there is some revolutionary force in Brazil we will provide aid to the government of Brazil to put down an internal insurgency?
>
> *Winship:* . . . that is considered by the foreign governments a very essential element in their relationship with us.
>
> *Koch:* I will bet, for them, but how about for us?

The Inter-American Defense Board has on several occasions been a keen instrument of U.S. policy. In 1963, it provided military experts to uncover what it said were Cuban weapons in Venezuela. "As a result of the positive identification of the weapons and their origin," reads an IADB brochure, "political sanctions were taken against the Cuban conspiracy." Two years later, the IADB provided a collective window dressing for U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic.

But it is in the quiet seminar rooms and lecture halls of the Inter-American Defense College that the future is being mapped. For Latin American armies are no longer just the action arms and occasional managers of their countries; they have in most cases become the permanent managers—the juntas.

The IADC curriculum is divided into five "academic periods" during the nine-month course of study: a Review of General Principles, the World Situation, the Inter-American System, Continental Security and Collective Defense, and Special Academic Activities, a period when an individual research project is presented to each member of the class. Outside speakers address the students, among them former Ambassador Averell Harriman. Instruction is offered by simultaneous translation in Spanish, English, Portuguese and French.

According to the college, a prime objective of the course load is "to develop techniques for the collective planning at the highest international level in order to achieve greater unity in matters of doctrine relating to the security of the continent." In addition, the college would like "to promote friendship and unity among the participants of the various countries with a view toward strengthening the spirit of American solidarity."

That spirit, of course, is based on an assumption that a unity of interest defines the relationship between the United States and the Latin American nations. Recent papers presented to the college suggest a theoretical underpinning for that relationship. The IADC vice director, Gen. Carlos De Meira Mattos of Brazil, for example, has recently written works examining the experiences of the "inter-American" strike force in the Dominican Republic (of which he was the official commander in chief); the "Doctrinal Politics of the March 31, 1964 Revolution," and "Brazil's Geopolitics and Destiny." In his latest essay, he applauds Henry Kissinger's attempts to establish "a new world order based on stability."

Other course work examines the role of international communism in exploiting workers, youth and women through their desire for a better life. Units on Marxism stress "the independence of the individual" in Western democracies versus "subservience of the individual to the state" in Communist systems. There is the tendency to confuse Marxism with the Soviet Union (or Cuba).

Cold-war thinking has been the mainstay of America's "national security managers" for decades; not surprisingly, Latin America's generals have been good students. As Chile's Augusto Pinochet put it in a speech commemorating the third anniversary of the coup last September, "National security is not only the protection of the territorial identity of the state, as traditionally accepted and understood, but most especially [it is the defense of] the essential values that make up the national soul or tradition; because without these," the General concluded, "the national identity itself would be destroyed."

Pinochet, like his counterpart Jorge Videla in Argentina, is the manager of a "new democracy . . . a clear, solid and vigorous doctrine that emanates from the juridical bases of the Chilean constitutional system." Notwithstanding Pinochet's abolition of the parliament, muffling of the courts and jailing of political opponents, his anthem finds an echo in Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and elsewhere in the hemisphere.

To rule in Latin America today, however, one must be a superb manager. The IADC's course load devotes

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Vadillo, el Sol de Mexico

plenty of time to the study of industrial and financial management, as well as to transportation, trade, agriculture, energy and communications. The international lending institutions are analyzed, as are the operations of the multinational corporations.

"The college is training people to more efficiently manage a government," says retired Adm. Gene LaRocque, director of the IADC from 1969 to 1972, "without any encouragement for them to take over." But LaRocque, now the head of the Center for Defense Information, a project of the Fund for Peace in Washington, sees a multitude of problems arising as a result of such training.

"It's unhealthy to build up a cadre of military governors all over the world and this is what we do to some extent," he offered on a recent afternoon. "We've contributed to keeping the military in power by increasing the efficiency of individuals.

"Now, there are certain advantages to exposing them to us, to our democratic capitalism, and hope they become more like us. But there is no question that they become more competent administrators.

"But my worry transcends this. I worry about strengthening military forces in general. In Latin America, the more efficient the military are, the more powerful the military are, and"—he paused—"the more powerful *our* military are.

"These days," LaRocque explained, "when you need a problem solved, you go to the Pentagon. The admiral there knows the admiral in Latin America."

He offered an example from a different part of the world: "When I was at the Pentagon, the negotiations over U.S. bases in Spain faltered until the U.S. military was brought in. They could talk to their Spanish counterparts. This kind of thing tends to militarize our foreign policy.

"Now this wasn't too much of a problem in the past," the Admiral added, "because the military dictatorships, historically speaking, were short-lived. They would step in to restore order, and then not too much later return the government to civilians. We opted for that over communism. But the new development is that the military is staying in power. We ought to draw a lesson," he concluded, "from what is happening in Latin America. There is a growing military there—and here."

Admiral LaRocque's successor at the IADC, General Kaericher, thinks this is not necessarily a bad development. "In the terms that I think of it," he said, the college "has been an overwhelming success. The men are getting to know each other. National antagonisms are lowered." Citing the settlement of the border war between El Salvador and Honduras a few years ago, the General said that "if problems were left to the military, we would have a lot less war and problems." Warming to the subject, General Kaericher recalled a visit to Paraguay. He said he told President Stroessner that he had "never been to a place where the people were so poor and looked so happy. I said it because it really looked that way," he explained. "Of course, I haven't the faintest idea of his true popularity."

With cash from the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the multinational corporations flowing into their coffers, the popularity of these U.S.-trained juntas would appear to be progressively less important. Supported by the increasing participation of international industrial, financial and military institutions, their grip on the Presidential palace becomes less and less dependent on traditional sources of power within their own countries.

As Brazilian economist Helio Jaguaribe put it at a 1968 Council of Social Sciences meeting in Peru, the internationalization of military rule has resulted in a new kind of fascism, one that unites the policies of economic modernization and the preservation of political and social immobility. It is, he said, "colonial fascism"—fascism, because it is "a model for promoting economic development without changing the existing social order"; and colonial, because it depends on "the West in general and the United States in particular, due to its need for foreign assistance and foreign markets."

Only the Chilean-style *"nueva democracia,"* as Pinochet calls it, is now capable, he thinks, of confronting Marxism, "that intrinsically perverse ideology of permanent aggression" which, in his view, would like to ride the four horsemen of the apocalypse into power across the hemisphere. After years of increasingly authoritarian rule, the societies of Latin America probably would, as Pinochet predicts, explode if allowed even a small measure of freedom.

"Drastic situations," an Argentine official said recently, "require drastic remedies," one of which, it would seem, is international terrorism against the enemies of the "new democracy." Over the past three years,

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what appear to be agents of the Chilean junta's intelligence arms, the DINA, have carried out assassinations of former comrades of the late Salvador Allende in Buenos Aires, Rome and, most recently, in Washington, D.C., the murder of Orlando Letelier. Other exiles from Chile, and Uruguay as well, have disappeared in Argentina. Brazilian military officers have helped train Chilean officers in torture, according to several eyewitness accounts from exiles. Right-wing Cuban veterans of the Bay of Pigs have been supplied with Chilean passports and have found shelter in Guatemala, Costa Rica and Nicaragua. A recent series of news reports describe their possible close relationship with Edwin P. Wilson, an ex-CIA employee who runs a Washington-based arms business.

The thread that weaves through all these developments is the common and close association of Latin America's ruling officers with the U.S. military and intelligence establishment, as well as with one another. While attending schools such as the IADC, they came to know one another on a first-name basis. And even now, a communications network designed for the hemisphere's defense and with its nerve center in the Pentagon, allows them to stay in constant touch across the continent. An admiral in Brazil can pick up the telephone in Rio de Janiero and talk over a secure line to his former classmate in Santiago almost any time he wants.

In this continual search for a new "external threat," the U.S. and Latin American military establishments found a handy new ogre with the end of Portuguese colonialism and the victory of Cuban-supported revolutionary forces in Angola. That development also lent additional stimulus to the military's push for a South Atlantic Treaty Organization (SATO).

Designed to include South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and the United States, the idea of a South Atlantic alliance has been quietly pushed by the Pentagon since 1956, when a U.S.-inspired Inter-American Naval Committee was formed and conducted fleet maneuvers over the last years of the decade.

According to private analysts who closely watch Latin American military developments from Washington, the Pentagon has been having considerable success with SATO, despite objections from the State Department, which is generally more attuned to the problem of human rights in Latin America. U.S.-trained naval officers in South American countries, joining their ruling juntas in increasing numbers, are also lobbying one another's governments through such international bodies as the Organization of American States, the analysts say.

However, the prospects for SATO are not clear. Last September, Brazil's Foreign Minister denounced South Africa and said a South Atlantic pact would not have "the slightest possibility" if Pretoria were involved. On the other hand, a South African admiral visited Argentina the same month. Underscoring the growing strength of the military in political affairs there, an Argentine admiral endorsed the SATO idea, although a government-connected newspaper said such an alliance was unnecessary.

As Admiral LaRocque pointed out, the Pentagon has taken an increasing role in diplomatic affairs because of its enduring association with Latin America's military elites, many of whom are now in the driver's seat. He rues his own part in that development: "I was part of it, sure. I often suggested that we bring State Department officers into our classes in the war colleges. And we now have State Department liaison officers throughout the Pentagon, and vice versa. We've co-opted them."

Latin America's military managers, meanwhile, having found a direct road to control of their countries' policies through the instrument of *coup d'état*, wonder how far their friends in the Pentagon—who have taught them so well—will "let" President Carter go in mixing up human rights with the fight against international communism.

A telling illustration of how the Latin American military views the political independence of the Pentagon was sounded in *Ultima Clave*, an Argentine newspaper published by moderate military and political figures. It announced that Gen. Gordon Sumner, director of the Inter-American Defense Board, "will be sent by the Pentagon in the early days of April to express the backing of the American military for President Carter." It is no comfort to learn that Latin America's military feels the Pentagon has a choice.

The associations formed through the Inter-American Defense College, however elite, are only a small part of the picture. A dozen schools run by the U.S. military offer tactical training, with special emphasis on counter-guerrilla techniques. Most have impressive job-placement records. By October 1973, for example, more than 170 graduates of the U.S. Army's "School of the Americas," a counterinsurgency training operation in the Canal Zone, were heads of governments, Cabinet Ministers, commanding generals, or directors of intelligence in their own countries. The entire Chilean junta has been the beneficiary of United States military training at one time or another.

The effect of the training, observes H. Souza, a radical Brazilian sociologist, is that they arrive back home "to construct a new kind of state, and they arrive with a plan, which is not actually a military plan but a political and economic one. They arrive with a sense of mission, either to guarantee the function that country serves within the world capitalistic system or to try to change this function by means of nationalistic projects."

Warns Gene LaRocque: "If the trend continues where the military stays in power, then we should not be hosting the military here."

The Pentagon, however, more laden in the 1970s with analysts and planners than with soldiers, sees it differently: "In the language of business and managment, the Inter-American Defense College is cost-effective." And how does it determine that? "Like any teaching institution," the Army points out, "the Inter-American Defense College must be judged largely on the basis of the progress of its graduates and on the image which it creates in the community." □

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BACK TO 2 PLUS 2

COUNTERREVOLUTION IN MATH

GREGOR W. PINNEY

If you had dropped in on a certain sixth-grade classroom in Minneapolis a few years back, you would have found the youngsters working on sets and number properties and base five. They were learning the New Mathematics, along with some good old addition and subtraction. But if you went to the same classroom today, you would see a lot of the old reliable basic skills but not much New Math. On the children's desks are new textbooks, and at the front of the room is a teacher who is happier than he used to be.

The scene is the same in thousands of classrooms across the nation because a counterrevolution is going on. The New Math, which revolutionized school curricula twenty years ago, is being overthrown by the insurgent forces of fear, distrust and shifting values. The trouble with the New Math, says the teacher in Minneapolis, was that only the brighter half of the class could handle it. The rest had to be drilled on the basics.

"The kids could tell you how many were in a universal set, but they couldn't multiply six times six or seven times eight. I want someone to know how to balance a checkbook if he gets one at age 16, and sets and subsets aren't going to help him."

That teacher's remark is the essence of the counterrevolution and the whole back-to-the-basics movement. American education has become preoccupied with the lower half of the class and has decided—condescendingly—that the lower half can handle only practical skills. Meanwhile, the upper half gets roughly the same thing, despite all the talk these days about individualized education.

"As I see the posture of the materials coming out now, we're relating mathematics to other curriculum areas like career awareness," said a Scott, Foresman textbook salesman. "That's what we're finding people are looking for, because we don't find the same number going to college as they did in the late 1960s and early '70s. So the focus is on that aspect of math that has definite transfer." It is a dramatic turnabout from the days when students were supposed to achieve a mathema'ical brilliance that would take them further than the Russians into outer space. Today, school and society are more worried about whether youngsters will get back from the corner store with the correct change.

The New Math was more than just a cold-war weapon. It was a brave crusade to free students from memory drills, by teaching them the underlying principles of mathematics. And it inspired a whole era of curriculum revision—in physics, social studies, English, earth sciences.

Contrary to what the sixth-grade teacher said, the New Math was meant for all students—even the disadvantaged. To write off the culturally deprived and give them only rote learning simply would deprive them further, declared the School Mathematics Study Group in 1965. That group, housed first at Yale University and later at Stanford, was the central fount of New Math wisdom.

The New Math tried to excite students by unlocking the workings of the number system and then giving them a glimpse of the vast philosophical reaches of mathematics. My daughter got such a glimpse two years ago when she studied the New Math in first grade. She learned the difference between a number and a numeral, which current revisionists say is a useless verbal distinction. But that distinction introduced the young scholar to the eternal concept of number and to the fact that numerals (1, 2, 3) are merely symbols assigned to numbers. She probably has heard the last of it, however, because her school has purchased the new Macmillan Mathematics series, which discards just about all of the New Math.

On the surface, it seems that fear about basic skills has killed the New Math. Mathematics test scores have been going down for a decade. And like bobcats pouncing on a fallen deer, the critics made an easy case that the New Math cheated students of addition and subtraction, while it was teaching them sets and distributive properties. With characteristic exaggeration, critics wrote magazine articles on "The New Math Doesn't Add Up" and "Where the New Math Went Wrong," creating an impression that computational skills had been bombed back into the Stone Age. The biggest broadside in this fusillade was Morris Kline's 1973 book, *Why Johnny Can't Add: The Failure of the New Math,* which proved only that Kline did not like the New Math, not that it had failed.

Textbook publishers, always looking for new selling angles, seized on the popular alarm and used it to justify a new round of textbooks. "Nationwide test scores showed that the new approach had failed to do what most people expected elementary mathematics to do: teach kids how to add, subtract, multiply and divide," said a press release from Scott, Foresman. No equivocation.

But the New Math did not produce a generation of mathematical clods. Most children of the New Math performed quite well on simple computation when they were tested by the National Assessment of Educational Progress in 1972. In fact, they did better than had their elder brothers and sisters, who were drilled in the old math.

And the New Math cannot be blamed for the falling scores on college aptitude tests and standardized achievement tests. Scores have been falling in almost every subject—science, writing, social studies, reading—not just mathematics. The fault lies in some deep cultural change in attitudes toward learning, not in curriculum changes

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like the New Math. But most critics have ignored this overall trend. They have ignored as well the fact that the score decline on College Board tests began in 1964 —before the New Math children reached high school. Those 1964 graduates had learned to compute in elementary school with the old math.

These realizations, however, have begun recently to make some impression. One of Scott, Foresman's senior editors, Nick Lovdjieff, has conceded that "There's a general slippage, and many people are beginning to say maybe we didn't do as badly as we thought in elementary math." But fear about basic skills is only the simple part of the story. The real reasons for the abandonment of the New Math are distrust and shifting values.

The 1970s have seen a collapse of public faith in the schools and in the creative power of liberal education. After enduring a decade of unfulfilled educational promises, the public and its decision makers have become unwilling to trust the schools with any task unless the results can be measured before the children get out of the schoolhouse door. More and more tests are being demanded. This sentiment is running strong in many states where legislatures and state boards of education have begun to insist that students pass "minimum competency" tests before advancing to the next grade or being graduated from high school.

The Minneapolis Tribune found this year that only 41 percent of the state's adults believe the schools are doing a good job. A decade ago, that figure stood at 77 percent. Nationally, the Gallup poll reported last year that only 42 percent of those questioned gave the schools an A or B rating.

Not only was confidence stronger but educational values tended more toward the cerebral in the 1950s and early 1960s when the New Math was emerging. It was a time of incipient intellectuality, which flared briefly as a backlash to the supposed sluggishness of the progressive era and to the embarrassment of Sputnik I. The backlashers said the trouble with education was that it had been left to professors of education and had been isolated from the intellectuality of traditional academic scholars.

To cure that ailment, university intellectuals like mathematician Edward Begle and physicist Jerrold Zacharias teamed up with educationists to revise elementary and secondary curricula. And the marriage of these previously estranged parties, despite its backlash origins, produced a legitimate regeneration of school mathematics. The standard math curriculum was at least 200 years out of date, so the revisionists injected some modern developments, notably, set theory. But more important, they tried to teach underlying principles with such devices as number properties and other number bases.

"What we were trying to do was to get kids to understand what they were doing so they'd be smarter in problem solving," Professor Begle told me last year. And to achieve that understanding, he confessed, he was willing to sacrifice a little computational ability.

That sacrifice was acceptable in the incipient intellectuality of the 1950s and early 1960s because society conceived of education as a way to inspire students to excellence, rather than simply to make them competent. But the intellectual period did not last long and neither did its values. America regained its self-respect in space in the 1960s. Johnny's attempt to catch up with Ivan was forgotten, especially after a group of Soviet scientists concluded that it was Ivan who was behind. Civil rights and poverty moved to the top of the national agenda in the Kennedy and Johnson years. Then the educational winds shifted in the Nixon era to accountability and career education. In the 1970s, the economy slumped and jobs became scarcer, even for the highly educated.

These turns of events undercut the intellectual values that once supported the New Math, because they forced the schools to focus on the disadvantaged child and on practical, measurable skills. The schools could no longer slight computational skills, no matter how marginally. And they could no longer gear their curricula to future scientists and mathematicians.

Schoolteachers—and trainers of schoolteachers—must bear some of the blame for the downfall of the New Math. A teacher in Wisconsin was found drilling her students one day on the base eight number system, completely missing the point for teaching it. And many teachers used old rote-style techniques for teaching such things as intersection of sets, without ever telling the students what earthly good an intersection is.

Many did not know. One teacher told me set intersections are useful in computer science; another said they have a philosophical connection; and two others did not even venture a guess. A set intersection is a group of objects with the common properties of two other sets. If you have a set of bicycles and a set of red objects, the intersection is red bicycles. Like all of set theory, intersections are useful for defining and organizing quantities for mathematical processing.

It is widely believed that teachers spent so much time pounding New Math words like "commutative" and "distributive" into young heads that they did not have time for the basics. But the National Advisory Committee on Mathematical Education concluded in 1975 that just the opposite had occurred—that most teachers skipped over these strange topics and spent the bulk of their time as they always had, on computation.

Nobody knows for certain, but the committee's findings are plausible. Last year, I visited neighborhoods in Minneapolis and St. Paul where the New Math supposedly was taught heavily in its heyday. I was told by students who attended elementary schools in those areas five or six years ago that they had received plenty of basic skills but relatively little New Math. It is likely that teachers cheated students more by slighting the New Math than by overdoing it.

The shift away from the New Math is evident in textbooks now published by old familiar companies like Macmillan, American Book Co., and Scott, Foresman. They play down the New Math or drop it altogether.

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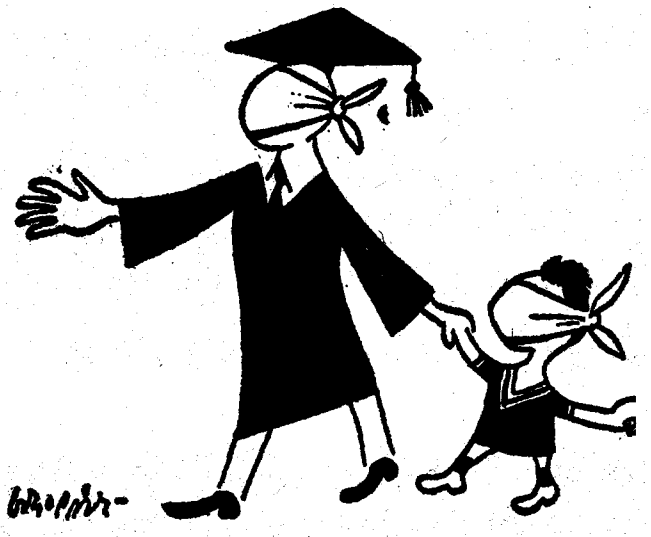
The new books are decidedly simpler. Lessons often cover just a page, so that students can learn a new procedure and achieve gratification quickly by practicing it. They avoid some of the intermediate steps and buttressing theories that the New Math enthusiasts once considered essential.

The American Book Co. says a student does not have to do a whole page of subtracting 3 from 20 and then 3 from 17, and so on, to learn that division is actually repeated subtraction. He can move fairly quickly into division form and does not have to be told that the 3s are "equivalent number sets," said a company editor.

Sets—the trademark of the New Math—still show up in some of the current textbooks, but in a watered-down form that makes sets little more than groups of penguins or thimbles or firemen to be added or subtracted. Gone are such things as union and intersection of sets, which once gave a hint of the vast world mathematicians have opened up in the past century.

And almost gone are other number bases, like base five and base twelve, which were not valuable in themselves but were supposed to show young minds that numbering systems are man-made and arbitrary. "But how many guys pushing a hack through the streets of Minneapolis need to know that the basis of numbers is arbitrary?" said David Dye, the Minnesota state mathematics consultant.

The publishers have loaded their new textbooks with



exercises for drill—"practice" is the preferred term—to answer the cry for basic skills. And they have tried to make lessons "relevant to today's world." The students will get consumer education when the problems ask them to buy baseballs at a sporting-goods store and career education when they figure sales commissions as a used-car saleswoman does. Yes, saleswoman. The publishers of the old math are not looking for arguments with the New Woman.

Sixth-graders in 1977 are confronted with this question in their *Basic Mathematics* textbooks from American Book Company: "Bill bought these items to fix his bicycle: a $3.09 tire, a $1.07 tube, and a $1.25 horn. He gave the clerk $5.50. What was his change?"

These story problems are supposed to teach problem solving, and the publishers are pushing the idea as if they had just invented it. But story problems are about as new as Jacob Willetts's textbook *The Scholar's Arithmetic* of 1817. Asked Willetts: "When hens are 9 shillings a dozen, what will be the price of 6 dozen of eggs, at 2¢ for 3 eggs?" Those hens are a diversionary snare but, though Willetts did not know it, the problem as a whole introduces the idea of sets.

The current publishers accuse the New Math of failing to teach problem solving. It's an old bugaboo. Every generation of textbook authors has used it against the previous generation.

The New Math, in fact, had story problems. But it also had some deeper ways to get at problem solving, such as with concepts like the distributive property. If you know, for example, that multiplication factors can be pulled apart into two or more addends, you do not have to memorize the procedure for multiplying mixed numbers such as in 5¼ x 8. Simply multiply 5 x 8 and ¼ x 8 and then add the products: 42.

The current revisionists are selling relevance. But they are hardly being relevant when they push more drill and basic skills onto youngsters who are growing up in a world of electronic calculators. When the teen-age clerks at Burger King restaurants add up a Whopper-and-fries order, they use a special calculator. The company cannot afford to let them use pencil-and-paper arithmetic, even though they are paid only the minimum wage. Like everyone in civilization, though, the clerks must know how to add on paper, for the calculators break down once in a while. But the clerks do not have to be computational whizzes.

What is needed today—as much as it was in the early days of the New Math—is a sense of how numbers work, how to pull numbers apart into convenient segments, how to apply math skills and how to estimate answers. A person who doesn't know enough about number principles to guess at rough answers will be a helpless victim of the electronic calculator age whenever the calculator goes haywire.

It isn't going to help him to drill and drill until he can add 89¢ and 25¢ in six seconds instead of eleven seconds. He will score better on achievement tests, but he will not be better prepared for life.

Poor students will have difficulty with concepts, of course. They have difficulty with almost every aspect of schoolwork. But that does not mean they should be confined to the simplest forms of learning. It does not mean that they should be protected from a Shakespearean sonnet or an energy-conversion principle or a theory of the frontier's effect on history. Much of traditional liberal education is for opening up a vision of the world, not for mastering a piece of it and selling it.

But what poor students need and what all students need will be difficult for the current mathematics curriculum to deliver because of the fear, distrust and shifting values that plague it. The needs are likely to remain unmet until confidence and intellectual values can be restored. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

The Tradition of the Not So New

GENE LYONS

The Fiction Collective was established in 1974 by a group of novelists and short-story writers, most of them academically connected, as a means of publishing and distributing writers whose work had been turned down or badly handled by commercial publishing houses. The main contention of the Collective's members from the beginning has been that the American "publishing industry has been starving out serious fiction," to quote one of its founders, Ronald Sukenick, in a letter protesting a negative review of the organization's first three offerings printed in *The New York Times Book Review*. Since then the organization has published twenty fiction titles, for each of which the author has put up $3,000 or more (costs have risen and production expenses vary somewhat with length) of his own money. Copy editing was to have been shared by the members, although some say each author now edits his own manuscript and proofreads his galleys alone. Books are accepted or not accepted for publication by a vote of the membership. During its existence the Fiction Collective has been variously supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency, Brooklyn College, a public institution, and an organization called the Teachers & Writers Collaborative. Brooklyn College also helps out with office space and other small favors.

Now there are any number of things to be said about the dissemination of contemporary writing in this country, and many of them are unpleasant. After a few years reviewing fiction, primarily for the *Arkansas Gazette*, *The New York Times Book Review* and the now defunct *Bookletter*, I have consumed my share and more of the fictional sludge merchandised each season. As a result I can now spell "assassination" without having to check the dictionary, and am so sick of Nazis that a parade of Storm Troopers in front of my house could not lure me away from the NBA game of the week. A critic tempted to launch jeremiads against the stuff should remember that a simple 200 words of plot summary will warn off all but the most fanatically tasteless of readers. Besides which, it is undeniably true that without what Robert Coover calls the "list-thickening commercial shit" most publishers make their money on, there would be little cash to finance more serious work. Trying to wean the blow-dryer and station-wagon set from Harold and Irving and get them on Borges is in any case as fruitless as it would be meaningless.

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But it is a long jump from this situation to Coover's assertion in the introduction to *Statements 2*, the Fiction Collective's "house organ" and most recent anthology, that "the immediate consequence of this dictatorship of the marketplace is that it's all rags or riches. You make a million or you don't even get printed." Even allowing for rhetorical overstatement, it is also manifestly untrue. Coover himself has published four books that I know of with commercial presses, at least two of which, *Pricksongs and Descants* and *The Universal Baseball Association, J. Henry Waugh, Proprietor*, are mass-market paperbacks after having done, I am sure, at least respectably well in hard covers. (I have read only the second and recommend it unequivocally.) It is not unusual to see either title on college reading lists. Yet I am also sure that if Coover is a wealthy man at all, which I suspect he is not, he did not get that way from his fiction. But unless he has a temperamental aversion to universities and writers' conferences, either of which would be perfectly understandable, even laudable, it is equally unlikely that he is laboring away in squalor and penury at his next novel.

Commercial publishers bring out literally hundreds of novels every year that either lose money or do little more than break even. At the expense perhaps of riding Coover too hard I imagine that his first novel, *The Origin of the Brunists*, was one of them, but, if true, that would have had nothing to do with the novel's quality as literature. Or not as much, in any case, as one would like it to have had. Why publishers print books that they have no intention of advertising or even of distributing, is one of those mysteries of modern life that has no easy answer. Maybe, since everything else does, it has something to do with taxes. But far more books are printed, advertised and distributed than even the most conscientious professionals can keep track of, let alone the average reader. Because of our wealth and partly because of the direct subsidies given thousands of literati by our vast educational system, the United States has many more fiction writers than the reading public is able to support. Of 40,000-odd titles brought out by American publishers last year only 150 were first novels or books of short stories, which from the point of view of all the ambitious young students and their teachers in Creative Writing seminars across the country does not seem like very many. But when the centralized nature of our literary culture is taken into account, it is obviously far too many for more than a few to get the attention they would like. We are adding new novelists to the pile at three a week, after all, not to mention second, third and fourth novelists. When was the last time you or anybody you know bought and read three hard-cover novels in a week, let alone first novels by people you never heard of? So publishers gamble on writers the way some people do on hog-belly futures, investing now in what they hope will be a profitable commodity three or four books later. Convinced for the most part that such books will not sell, they spend as little money as possible on promotion and distribution, leaving many expectant authors bitterly disappointed. Except for the fact that authors can sometimes change publishers the economics of the thing are a bit like sharecropping. Hence an enterprise like the Fiction Collective which, like many another small-press venture around the country, may be seen as an attempt to circumvent the imperatives of the centralized market by locating and catering to an audience of more specialized tastes.

Yet after reading *Statements 2* and browsing through several of the novels published by the Collective over the last three years I am at a loss to imagine who or what that audience could be. Not all of the work in the anthology is so pretentiously banal as J.M. Alonso's *Althea*, a Fiction Collective novel reviewed here [*The Nation*, March 26]. If it were there would be little

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point in wasting another column on the organization. But not very much of it, to be perfectly blunt, is so much better as to urge anybody to go out of their way to lay out $2.95 for a book, nor ought one waste any more attention on the commonplace whining of the group's members about the insufficient notice paid to literary genius in America.

A large part of the Collective's case against the publishing industry rests upon its alleged hostility or incomprehension to what is "new" or "innovative" or "experimental." In the organization's lexicon all of those words are good ones, as "traditional" and "commercial" are bad. Now in America no one ever uses "new," as in the "new, improved lemon-scented Chevrolet Malibu," unless he is trying to sell us something. The word has virtually inescapable intimations of cant, never more than when it is being applied to ideas or attitudes, as in "new morality," "New South" or here in "The New Fiction." Were the Collectivists as a group not obsessed with irony about everything on earth except their own "voices" (another cant term), they might have spared us some of their claims to originality. In fact there is nothing even remotely novel in the fictive practices of the group, and a good deal that is so tiresomely conventional in the contemporary fashion as to verge at times on self-parody.

At the risk of seeming reductive I should like to list, with representative examples, the three main discoveries about prose fiction that the Collective seems to regard as daring:

(*1*) Stories calling themselves "fiction" are not true. They are made up.

From Russell Banks's "By Way of an Introduction to the Novel, This or Any":

> You know, it occurs to me that I really needn't bother with all this. Certainly not at this point. Perhaps later in the narrative such descriptions will be of significance, but here, now, I'm merely attempting to explain how I, Russell Banks, came to write a novel with a hero whose "real life" prototype is my friend, my own "hero," as a matter of fact. . . . I had reached a point in my relation to him where almost anything could happen and where whatever did happen would be believable to me. . . . In other words, the man had become sufficiently real to me that I could, and therefore should, write a novel about him—even if that "reality" were nothing more than a projection extruded by my unconscious life, even if it were no more than imaginary.

One would have thought that Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet*, among forty or fifty others, had done this kind of thing to death.

(*2*) Since stories are made up it follows that the traditional beginnings, middles and ends of retrograde, old-fashioned fiction are somewhat arbitrary and not to be confused with genuine necessity. Any story could have been told differently. The narrator, by entering his story as a "voice," demonstrates his advanced sensibility by pointing this out as often as possible.

From Raymond Federman's Fiction Collective novel, *Take It or Leave It*, described on the back cover as a book in which "the narrator involves his listeners in digressive arguments about politics, sex, America, literature, laughter, death and the telling of the story itself. Consequently as the story progresses it also deviates from its course and eventually cancels itself [whatever that means] as the voices in the fiction multiply . . . [and] makes a shamble of traditional fiction and conventional modes of writing, and does so with effrontery and laughter":

> Why, when, where, how, why me, why then, who, and then, in which direction? How the hell do I know! . . . Dammit! If you guys keep talking all the time/and at the same time/ we'll never get it straight! We'll never get there! Do you think it's easy to tell a story? Any story? HEY! Particularly when it's not YOUR story—a second hand story! Anywhere? To retell a story which was already told from the start in a rather dubious manner. Do you think it's easy to set it up so that it looks coherent? Or even readable? Not to mention credible? I tell you it's not easy.

NOTES FOR THE FIRST LINE OF A SPANISH POEM

We remember so little,
We are certain of nothing.
We long to perish into the absolute.
Where is a mountain
To spread its snowfields for us like a shawl?
Enough of the nostalgic policeman
Forever dropping his suitcase on someone's hat!

You might begin,
The men who come to see me are not exactly lovers.
Or, Seen at a distance the gazelle is blue.
That's just your way of cheering me up.

You might begin,
The quality of the telegram is vulnerable.
Or even, The spirit of the telegram is virginal.
By now I am ravenous.

You might begin,
Nothing's more passionate than a train
Entering an enormous depot,
Empty except for two lovers, irreconcilable,
Parting. *Then*
No one's more visible than a blind man on the street.

Things that are that were never meant to be!
Terrible music!
The utter confusion of surfaces!
The first steps toward probability!

You might begin,
Near the edge of the mind, the mind grows defenseless,
Sleepy in the way it sees,
Like Columbus on the edge of the world.
It feels the grip of all it cannot grasp,
Like the blind man trying to stay out of sight.
Show me any object, I'll show you rust on a wave.

You begin,
Outside the mind, the snow undresses and lies down.

James Galvin

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Fearless innovator Federman also refuses to number the pages of his bulky text, and speaks of a "battle against the linearity of syntax," which he wages with the dazzling new weapon of creative typography.

(3) Words and languages themselves are also made up, and may have a purely noumenal existence. It is this supposition that makes it impossible for any "real" writer to use the word "real," or any other that might imply metaphysical earnestness without the ironical quotation marks. Hence the flatulence of a writer like Federman indicates neither incompetence nor self-indulgent, lazy thinking and writing but extreme sophistication. At its furthest reaches, this skepticism about language compels the writer to demonstrate constantly that language is a kind of trapdoor through which all must fall. He does this through a kind of linguistic play (see Huizinga and other authorities on the seriousness of play) known as a "pun" or "play on words."

From B. H. Friedman's "P————: A Case History," a tale in which a horny middle-aged man has a case of priapism, or permanent erection, which turns out to be a symptom of terminal leukemia. "As he finishes dressing he wonders if he should call the office and tell them—what?—that something has come up. He smiles. That is just the sort of vague explanation his secretary gives. In his case it's precise, too precise." And later, "but the analogy won't stand up (another joke, another smile)," and again "he tells the nurse that this is an emergency. She says she will fit him in. P———— smiles. The world is filled with cruel jokes."

Not to mention juvenile ones. In Peter Spielberg's "The Hermetic Whore," about a government project to cheer up the elderly by encouraging masturbation that ends up so popularizing the practice that intercourse goes out of fashion and the birth rate plummets, there are more. Spielberg tells the one about

> the crazy scientist who killed and cremated all the cats he could get hold of. Yes, cats. You know: kittens. Meow, meow! He sifted their ashes into empty coffee cans, or maybe it was baby-food jars, and tried to sell them to the hard-up dudes on 42nd street.
>
> "Psst! Want a piece of the best stuff in town?" he would buttonhole a likely customer.
>
> "Sure. Where is she? How much?"
>
> "Right here in the jar. Five dollars a spoonful. Just add some hot water. My invention—instant pussy. . . ."

And so a one-liner copied from 25¢ vending machines in half the gas station men's rooms in America becomes a whole routine.

In *Take It or Leave It* Federman explains why his narrator has decided to travel across America by car (a daring new plot):

> To penetrate you (all the way to the WEST COAST) because (up to now) I must admit I hadn't gone very far—very deep. Mostly stayed on the margin. Yes dealing mostly in the CUNT-FRONTATION. But now it was really going to be an enormous PENIS-TRATION. I couldn't wait to get going. AMERICA here I come!

When he is not altering the shape of literary perception Raymond Federman is a Professor of Comparative Literature.

Not all of *Statements 2* or of the Collective's novels are so bald as the passages quoted. But I chose each of the writers above not only because his work was illustrative of what seems to me to be the Fiction Collective's guiding principles and general tone but also because he has a book in print with the organization and is therefore a member of its editorial board. The sexual obsessiveness of the last three is equally characteristic, as if a group of academically employed solipsists has no other subject matter available to it. Spielberg's "The Hermetic Whore" contains a carefully enumerated list of ways for men to masturbate, which seems just about right. Any of the three could easily make a living writing to the *Penthouse* Forum if they could forgo the puns for a while. But that would be commercial. It would not be Art.

I find it puzzling that writers of genuine talent like Jonathan Baumbach, Russell Banks and Ronald Sukenick seem content with the self-imitation of easy effects that their work in *Statements 2* shows. Reading too much of it is like watching a basketball game in which the players have gotten so cool that they have agreed that true devotion to the sport requires that all shots be missed and the ball double-dribbled on purpose. I find it depressing to imagine the Fiction Collective version of contemporary literary "reality" becoming the currency of seminar tables all over the country, a gloom that is partially lifted by my knowledge of how little attention the most promising young writers will pay in the long run to any teachers. I emerge from my reading tempted to paraphrase Flannery O'Connor's remark on the effect of the American university on the national literature: if the publishing industry is stifling writers, it isn't yet stifling enough of them. But the Fiction Collective is not the whole story. □

Notes to the Milkman

HENRY'S FATE. *By John Berryman. Edited by John Haffenden. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 94 pp. $7.95.*

J. D. O'HARA

Time and space conceal the truth from us, as everyone used to know until Aristotle. But now every writer's latest work prompts a thoroughgoing revaluation (pity the poor writer, bereft even of a batting average) and woe betide him if he is clumsy enough not to look ahead, to shape his career, and to die, like Dante, leaving in his study a ms. *Paradiso* ready for the printer. Woe betide him, in fact, if he is clumsy enough to die at all, on any terms: his scraps will rise to testify against him, his revisions will reveal his mortality, and his detritus will detract from his achievement.

Henry's Fate constitutes the first shovelful of John Berryman's detritus. (Berryman died early in 1972; two works which he supervised have appeared since.) This collection contains four groupings of verses: forty-five "uncollected" Dream Songs; eleven unconnected poems; four "Fragments and Unfinished Poems," and ten poems written in "the later period." This exasperatingly vague description owes much to the almost total absence of information offered us by secretive editor John Haffenden, Berryman's biographer-to-be and the author of an alternately useful and irritating introduction. "The time is not yet ripe for a complete edition of his works," Haffenden confides to us—not explaining why—and then he attempts to justify the publishing of these particular Songs (several hundred remain unpublished) and the other verses and fragments. He is not successful: few of these poems are up to the standards set by *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet* and *The Dream Songs*, uneven as those collections were.

Much of what we learn from this vol-

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ume is therefore essentially negative. The latest poems evoke the biographical horrors of incurable alcoholism and impending suicide—but not artistically; not like Hopkins's late sonnets or Plath's last poems; the poetic skills have been too much damaged. The miscellaneous poems remind us that skilled poets possess (on occasion, with luck and a following wind) fine powers of verbal, rhythmic and imagistic expression, which like other mortal gifts they can misuse for merely personal ends. The resulting notes of apology, flattery, blame, or seduction are charged with an intensity beyond that of mere civilians, yet the results are not art, however successful they may have been in the real world, and no editor or poet should claim them as art. They may be fine in themselves (one hopes that the seductive "Ten summers past . . ." in this volume worked as effectively on its object as her letter had worked on Berryman), but after all they are merely amusements, skillful notes addressed to the milkman.

Haffenden also prints extensive drafts toward the abandoned poem "Washington in Love" and the "Proemio" to what Berryman hoped would become a long, post-Dream Songs project. The reading of these fragments is painful, but at least it persuades us beyond any doubt that the Berryman we already know is all there is to know, and that he left behind him no "Triumph of Life" or "Fall of Hyperion" to make us speculate about aborted promise. We turn back to the Dream Songs, then, and to the uncollected ones here (which, Haffenden reminds us, Berryman never *definitively* uncollected).

Poets as various as Pound, Crane, Williams, Zukovsky, and Basil Bunting have created collections or sequences of loosely linked poems on related themes, often written over many years. But none of them more successfully evoked our contemporary self than did Berryman in the Dream Songs: the hip, flip, self-centered, lustful and irresponsible Henry, set intermittently in a deliberately offensive coon-show setting with a deathy Mr. Bones as sideman and interlocutor, combined at his best many of the central qualities of modern art. Listen to the last stanza of a Song from the present collection; Henry—now Berryman himself, or very close—has been versifying politics and the Supreme Court, and he's tired:

Gravid Henry groaning, tousled like a mop—
these labour-pains, how can he keep it up?
Is it our need he feels,
or something just between the two of them,
Henry & the English language, his stratagem
besides the banana peels.

We are more conscious than earlier ages of the artist's duplicity, his split between truth and poetry ("our need" vs. "his stratagem"); Berryman adds to that the problem posed by our current inability to keep a straight face even when lamenting: in an age in which *Ulysses* is the greatest novel, Beckett's metaphysical clowns the chief dramatic heroes, and Céline's view of war more credible than Homer's, how can we take seriously this bearded bard Berryman, "tousled like a mop," in his absurd fumblings with his muse, his skills, our need, and the banana peels that threaten to abort his pregnancy? How could he take himself seriously? No way.

Berryman's earliest sizable poem, "Homage to Mistress Bradstreet," contained in mature form many of the elements of his best poetic style, including abruptness, odd and anachronistic formality, and disjointed or fragmentary syntax. The leap upward into the Dream Songs involved giving this voice new, contemporary, and often autobiographical subject matter—including the most painful matters: Berryman's alcoholism and grim family life, and his father's suicide (after threatening to drown John and himself, he shot himself outside his son's bedroom window). This voice and subject matter were given to the self-divided, self-mocking, arrogant and insecure Henry, with his fake dialects, bad jokes, grasshopper leaps from subject to subject, and all the other devices with which he hoked his material up and put himself down.

Well, the construction of this complex poetic artifice was a fine feat, and *Henry's Fate* contains a delightful Song in celebration of it:

Henry under construction was Henry indeed:
gigantic cranes faltered under the load,
spark-showers from the welding played with daylight, crew after crew
replaced each other like Kings, all done anew
Daily, to the horror of the gathering crowd
which gazed in a silence of awe or sobbed aloud.

The structure huge mounted apace. Some sang,
others in prayer knelt; when the western wing
was added, one vast sigh
arose & made its way into the earless sky.
Lifts were installed, many had their ashes hauled.
Parents in the throng looked down appalled,

In the end the mighty roof was hoisted on.
The event transpired throughout the city at dawn,
foot upon violent foot
converged to shining Henry in the risen sun,
question tormented the multitude one by one
to see to what use it would now be put.

Many of the profitable results of such a complex artifice are apparent to the casual passerby, but others are likely to please craftsmen particularly. Robert Frost pointed out that it's no fun to play tennis without a net, however easier it is; art thrives on difficulties, no matter how arbitrary. The sorely taxed poet, struggling against his own self-imposed rules, can force himself into some splendid leaps and last-moment saves, or can develop remarkable grace under pressure, like a ballerina. But in the hands of a competent artificer even a complex artifice can become easy to wield; if he doesn't add new problems, it may become too easy. Byron grew too much at home with the comic devices of *Don Juan*, and the high-jinking intricacies of *Finnegans Wake* were buried, all too often, under the mechanical gimmickry of the final rewritings. So with the Dream Songs. All too soon Berryman learned to handle Henry and his voices; the techniques no longer demanded a remarkable intensity of inspiration and creation . . . not that such inspiration didn't continue to come, now and then, but more and more Berryman wrote Songs that were no more than letters to friends, editorials, or travel notes like the ones reprinted here.

Meanwhile other difficulties appeared, as Berryman's multitude suggests in wondering to what use the complex artifice would be put. *In Memoriam* is fatally flawed by its episodic structure and its short swallow-flights of song, incapable in their brevity and disjointedness of dealing adequately with the great issues that Tennyson raises. So the brevity of the Songs, and their self-mockery, their undercutting of positions, arguments and conclusions, and their fragmented evasiveness, resulted finally in repetitiousness or ephemerality rather than incremental accumulation and complication.

Even more than simple people like ourselves, poets need knowledge. "It takes away the heat and fever," as

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Keats pointed out; "and helps, by widening speculation, to ease the Burden of the Mystery. . . . The difference of high Sensations with and without knowledge appears to me this—in the latter case we are falling continually ten thousand fathoms deep and being blown up again without wings and with all the horror of a bare shoulderd Creature—in the former case, our shoulders are fledged, and we go thro' the same air and space without fear." Berryman had supported his first ambitious poem, "Homage to Mistress Bradstreet," with much study, but the Dream Songs—for all their complex technique—have no sturdy and expansive basis in knowledge, theory, or aesthetic. While Berryman was writing them he was engaged in several complex scholarly projects, to be sure, among them a critical edition of *King Lear* and a life of Shakespeare and another of Christ, besides the "Washington in Love"—but one might suggest, tentatively, that by then his alcoholism and his badly unhappy life had taken him beyond any aid that knowledge might be capable of giving, and that these studies were to him what similar researches were to the similarly troubled Coleridge:

not to think of what I needs must feel,
But to be still and patient, all I can;
And haply by abstruse research to steal
From my own nature all the natural man—
This was my sole resource, my only plan.

So in one of the Songs reprinted here we find Berryman's Henry, surrounded by painful awareness of Bellevue, the Tombs, Nixon, and the war in Vietnam, seeking escape in abstruse research:

Shall willing Henry study art history
or Number or write letters or test the text
of The Merry Wives *tonight?*

The variety of projects is ominous in itself, and Berryman significantly links them not to his discipline, his art—in fact he pauses to wonder "is his discipline *necessary*?"—but to good behavior:

he'll take his baby to the circus, he'll live,
'A drink, no thank you, sorry.'

Well, revaluation can occur only in Aristotle's world of time and space; among Platonic ideas, the Idea of the Dream Songs floats eternal and unchanging. To judge by such glimpses as the clouds allow, it's not a bad Idea at all. Many people have ruined their lives and minds with alcohol, and many have been haunted by such nightmares as Berryman's father. But few have gone downward to darkness while making such courageous gestures of defiance, self-assertion, wit, piety and intransigence as those made in the Dream Songs; and few have worked so hard to surpass themselves without evasion. If Henry's voice said nothing conclusive, it nevertheless made a joyful noise unto the Lord on the way to that last, uncrossable bridge. □

Winding Down the '60s

MORRIS DICKSTEIN

The decade of the 1960s can still be the subject of heated disagreement. It has begun to feel remote and, to the young, even legendary. Long-haired high school kids ask older siblings what it was like, but to other Americans it's all astonishingly vivid yet a little unreal.

As we approach the tenth anniversary of the Pentagon march it's worth asking how much of the '60s survives in our culture. Were most of the changes simply matters of fashion and life style, or have some proven deeper and more lasting? Perhaps this moment of renewal after the beginning of our first post-Vietnam administration is a good time to take stock.

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Not so long ago the nation was dramatically polarized between a large dissident minority and a stridently hostile government. Each blamed the other for its spleen and paranoia, and for its final desperate descent into lawlessness. The blood spilled in Vietnam was more than the terrible waste of lives: it was a debilitating hemorrhage of the national spirit.

Today a bustling new activism seems to be installed in Washington. A mean-spirited naysaying government by veto has given way, and the change has already begun to affect the national mood. The President's fervent comments on human rights, for example, whatever their ultimate effect, have begun to dispel the cold Machiavellian tone of the Kissinger era. Wherever we turn a cautious hopefulness seems the order of the day, a mood of qualified optimism reminiscent of Kennedy's early days in office, when the '60s first began. At least in image the President has taken pains to portray himself as a post-'60s politician, sensitive to the new constituencies (blacks, women) and issues (consumerism, the environment) that the '60s brought to the fore.

Despite this new mood the present legacy of the '60s is not mainly a political one. The immense upsurge of the Left during that decade has not been sustained, and college students, on the evidence of recent polls, have grown considerably more conservative. The end of the war and the draft removed the major source of youthful discontent. At the same time the constriction of the economy—which goes directly back to Johnson's expenditures for the war—created pressure for jobs and survival, even in the middle class, that made protest seem like a luxury.

Critical habits of mind, skepticism about men in power—these remain, thanks as much to Watergate as to the activism of the '60s. Tactics of direct action—sit-ins, public demonstrations, consumer boycotts—continue to be used for particular grievances, but in the present fiscal crisis they are more often aimed at preventing retrenchment than effecting reform. Yet while we try to keep schools, libraries, firehouses, and hospitals from being closed, the larger problems raised by the '60s refuse to go away, including racism, environmental pollution, military waste and overkill, the overall deterioration of cities and neighborhoods, the abuse of corporate power and abuses of civil liberties and human rights.

Despite a determined conservative backlash, which aims especially to insulate the CIA and the military budget from critical scrutiny, these issues are no longer the province of a beleaguered minority. The debate over the B-1 bomber shows that new weapons systems can no longer command automatic approval. Illegal activities by the FBI and CIA have been openly aired and acknowledged, though we have no real assurance they will not continue. Subjects like women's rights, racial inequality and the right to privacy, along with environmental and consumer issues, have joined the mainstream of political debate, even if we have yet to show enormous progress. Thus, like earlier protest movements, the radicalism of the '60s is being diluted and absorbed into the national consensus, the way the Socialist platform of 1912 became Democratic Party policy in the '30s.

Nevertheless, despite these advances, the more visible legacy of the '60s is

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cultural rather than political. Our established institutions have changed far less than our attitudes, feelings, and patterns of personal behavior. While people now "do their own thing" less flamboyantly than they did in the '60s, the push toward some kind of self-fulfillment has remained our most widespread goal. Casual and unconventional life styles, less dominated by morality and the work ethic remain available even as the affluence of the '60s fades. For middle-class youth the lock step from kindergarten to graduate school has been broken; kids can take time off to find themselves without ruining their prospects. The need to get ahead, to seek a premature niche on the corporate and professional map, has abated. The liberalization of social and sexual mores has not been reversed; instead, like the once rebellious hair and dress styles of the '60s, it has spread more widely through the population.

At its worst this stress on self-fulfillment, stripped of the political and communal meanings it had in the '60s, has led to a brittle narcissism, or a callow hedonism, as people grasp avidly for "peace of mind" or a piece of the action, whatever the effect on others. At its best it has left America a more open and tolerant place to live. We've learned to be relaxed and easygoing about matters that were taboo twenty years ago, from Red China to premarital sex. The rigidities of fashion, manners and public morality—to say nothing of political constraint and conformity—which held sway in the '50s, have given way to a more pluralistic society, less formal and hierarchical, more free of hypocrisy, more congenial to nonconformist behavior such as homosexuality. Even the President can joke in public about federal employees living in sin.

This benign mood shows up most clearly in the arts, where a kaleidoscope of heady innovation has stabilized—some would say stagnated—into a quieter climate of openness and diversity. Gone are the days when every art exhibition or off-Off-Broadway performance ushered in the apocalypse. In fiction the realism of the '50s coexists almost amicably with the modernism of the '60s, while painters now run the gamut from photorealism to pure abstraction. Abstract expressionist painting, like early atonal music, which once seemed like the dissolution of culture, now feels almost classical. So do the great rock albums of the mid-'60s. which easily overshadow the derivative ones being cut today. The hullabaloo of the avant-garde has died down while experimental styles have continued to thrive.

The least tangible part of the legacy of the '60s may be the most important, for it centers on people. A whole generation came of age in the '60s, weaned on the era's utopian aspirations, its assumptions about sex, society, and personal relationships, its communal rituals of dope, rock, and radicalism. The children of the '60s are marked by what they went through together; as they find their place in the world they'll no doubt bring special attitudes to bear that will change institutions and professions which will in turn change them.

We have heard the last of them as a generation but not as individuals, working on their own but merged, like the causes they espoused, into the texture of the national life. Utopian hopes can be disappointed, can be compromised, but can rarely be forgotten. Living on within us they continue to teach us to do the unthinkable, if only on a less grandiose scale. □

FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

The most appealing, and in some ways the most interesting, movie now current is *Between the Lines*. Directed by Joan Micklin Silver (*Hester Street*), it deals with the lives, professional and personal, of a group of young people who, a few years ago, were putting out a successful counterculture newspaper in Boston. The film is fiction, but from what little I know of underground journalism in Boston at the time, it is fiction that respects the facts. The script is by Fred Barron, who worked on both *The Boston Phoenix* and *The Real Paper*.

Between the Lines has a plot of sorts, but is less about what happened than about what it was like. That is, what it was like to have been a bunch of anti-Establishment gadflies who were astonishingly good at upsetting the most shrewdly protected apple carts; but who then, at the advanced age of 30 or so, began to lose their enthusiasm for crusading in the realization that the status quo is a lot like a punching bag—easy to dent but very hard to sway. It is the reformer's heresy, the weariness attending the discovery that, however clean you sweep the floor, someone will come along with muddy shoes.

When the cameras move in on *The Back Bay Mainline*, it is teetering on the edge of a sale to a publications operator who knows well enough how to turn the paper's reputation for enterprise and idealism into a consumer advertising money machine. But even without the intrusion of this balance-sheet villain, the paper is derailed. The loss of spirit can be felt in the staff's nostalgia for the recent past, and as well in the fracturing of personal relations as, one way or another, they confront compromise. Bright and attractive and clear about what they wanted to do, these young people seem to have escaped the self-badgering of adolescence; now they are suffering it in the delayed, more virulent form.

The excellence of the picture rests on the compassion with which author and director understand what the *Mainline*'s men and women are going through, and on the ability of a superb cast to make an audience share in that understanding. Being smart and energetic, the staff is full of comic antics; being touched with regret for their lost innocence and not a little fearful of a future without the "movement," members of the group can throw tantrums and turn on one another with shocking cruelty and violence. But whether they are loving or hating, themselves or one another, the actors give these people a credibility that is hypnotic and deeply exciting. It is a big cast, and I hesitate to play favorites in this company of almost equal excellence. But mostly because they occupy the strategic positions, I call attention to John Heard and Stephen Collins, as the two star (and temperamental) reporters; Lindsay Crouse, staff photographer, who is perhaps less baffled by the prevailing disillusion because of the satisfaction she finds in her craft; Gwen Welles, a less dedicated reporter, but as tormented as the others by a conflict of loyalties. And finally Jeff Goldblum, whose role is to play the most overt role player of the bunch, as the paper's rock critic and resident iconoclast.

The film world is full of talented, responsible people, and I don't know how it happened that *Between the Lines* is so remarkably satisfying. It has the cohesion and what seems to be the instinctive group communication that we are forever being told is the peculiar virtue of repertory theatre. Perhaps this cast had the repertory experience of having all grown up in the civil rights/Vietnam era. Perhaps they knew one another when first they met.

"Beware the Jabberwock"—yes, indeed; and especially if Monty Python humor is not the sort that splits your sides. *Jabberwocky* is the creation, principally, of Terry Gilliam, a member of Monty Python's Flying Circus and co-director of that company's earlier film in quest of the Holy Grail. It is commonly said that the Python phenomenon is something you either do or don't "get,"

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ICONS

Ljik *without likeness—these*
stock faces, gestures
blessing, baptising, slaying
the dragon, guarding
the deposit. Their draperies
embody prayer as flesh
embodies Word: they show
man made God, his Mother's soul
a baby white as picked bones
being lifted up, a whole
landscape made heaven
by red and gold
on fire for ever.

Keith Bosley

the implication being that, if you don't, there's something a bit dim about you. It's my misfortune to live under that cloud.

Not, mind you, that I fail to see what *Jabberwocky* and its ilk are up to. They are up to poking hilarious, slapstick fun at the foibles and excesses of contemporary society and its modes of popular entertainment. But the method of their satire, if that is what it is, appears to be straight-on exaggeration. Thus, if the target is violence, one doubles the gore; if it is oversized beasts with irrepressible appetites, the trick is to display not merely severed limbs and gnawed torsos but whole skeletons with their entrails gouged out and mere rags of flesh clinging to the ribs (faces, however, still relatively intact). And if the object of derision is the nitty-realistic costume romance, matters are so arranged that persons are repeatedly being peed on by those who enjoy the advantage of higher ground, or being besmirched by garbage thrown from whatever window they incautiously linger beneath. A joust to discover the hero who shall rid the countryside of the Jabberwock degenerates into a bloodletting with banners and trumpets that spatters everyone and everything but the lens of the camera itself. Camelot, or some such place, is crumbling before our eyes; the king is senile, the nobles are smirkers, and there are whiffs of homosexuality to elicit giggles over a current preoccupation. "*Reductio ad absurdum*" is the cry, and a very good one it is; but though I won't pretend to have foreseen every jape and contretemps in *Jabberwocky*, they have about them a sort of retrospective predictability that I found sobering.

The method expends a great deal of energy for rather small gains; it goads the cast into paroxysms of buffoonery that a little wit would have made unnecessary; in short, it is not cost-effective. Still, not to be entirely negative, I was pleased by the Jabberwock itself, a devilishly clever animation of the celebrated Tenniel drawing, and persuasively monstrous. The convenient thing about constructing a mythological beast is that you don't have to worry about lifelike articulation of limbs, neck, mouth and such, as with giant sharks and colossal gorillas. If the thing moves like a nightmare on a rampage, so much the better. Unhappily, the star of the film appeared only in the closing sequences. □

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HAROLD CLURMAN

The Three Sisters is the most beautiful of Chekhov's plays. I have seen it innumerable times in several languages and, though not by nature lachrymose, I have hardly ever seen it without shedding tears. This happened again at Frank Dunlop's production at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

It is not in the ordinary sense a sad or tragic play. I rarely cry at *The Seagull*, which ends with the suicide of the young man who, along with his beloved Nina, is the center of the play. And though Tusenbach, one of the most likable of the personages in *The Three Sisters*, is killed in a duel, it is not his death that induces my weeping. What moves me is a strain of feeling that is present throughout. It is the purity and tenderness with which Chekhov endows every moment, his sense of the absurdity of life, together with that element in his people which forever keeps them hoping to make life better no matter how bitterly disappointing it may prove at every turn. It is that special idealism and goodness which, without alleviation or consolation, constitutes the peculiar stamp of Chekhov's vision and artistry. This sentiment—neither optimism nor pessimism—makes Chekhov's plays truer to life than any others written, to say the least, in our time.

For this reason the question of whether his plays are funny or sad, comedies or tragedies is irrelevant. They are both at once. That is why the new cliché, which insists that comedy must be emphasized in Chekhov productions, strikes me as part of an evasive superficiality characteristic of much contemporary thinking. The muddle is largely based on the well-advertised dispute between Chekhov and Stanislavsky: Chekhov thought that Stanislavsky had made his characters into "cry-babies," that his plays had been made too somber and tearful.

To begin with, we should be reminded that such dramatist-director disagreements are inevitable and constant in the theatre—very often on matters of details, nuances. The fact is that, whatever the differences that may have arisen between Chekhov and Stanislavsky, Chekhov urged Gorki and others to write plays for the Moscow Art Theatre. It is clear, too, that if the Moscow Art Theatre had not produced Chekhov's plays, they might never have become known to us today, or even have been written.

I do not say this in defense of Stanislavsky. Chekhov's plays may be produced in different modes, according to historical circumstances—that is, according to the specific audiences whom they are to serve. If one proposes to make a travesty of them it is quite possible to do so. This was accomplished in the Soviet Union itself. In one such production the three sisters were ridiculed as frivolous and silly. It did not succeed theatrically with the Soviet audiences because the play became an arty exercise in directorial conceit and "revolutionary" distortion.

For myself, I am heartily sick and tired of hearing that Chekhov is "funny." Of course he is funny, even at moments when at the same time we cannot restrain our tears. One does not have to equate this with the elimination of Chekhov's humanity, which by virtue of his complete view of the human condition renders his plays both laugh-provoking and heartbreaking.

Very few of the people who now proclaim Chekhov side-splitting, as if they were making an extraordinary discovery, ever saw the original Stanislavsky productions. And I would like to set it down unequivocally that the Moscow Art Theatre's *The Cherry Orchard*, which I saw in Paris in 1922, was actually funnier for the most part than Andrei Serban's Lincoln Center production.

And anyone who takes the trouble to read the chapter in Stanislavsky's *My Life in Art* devoted to *The Three Sisters* will learn that after long weeks of rehearsal he realized that he was on the wrong track: the characters were not conscious of the tragedy of their lives, as he had at first thought them to be; he altered his interpretation accordingly. The now fashionable approach to Chekhov, which would make him a sort of highbrow Neil Simon, betrays not only a juvenile mentality, an inability to face existence with lucid courage or fortitude of spirit but a misunderstanding of the

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nature of comedy. We mistake it for a string of gags adding up to a "laugh show."

Dunlop is a gifted, skillful and intelligent director and his production of *The Three Sisters* is a careful attempt to deal with the Chekhov "problem." The pace is rapid and crisp, the scenes race along, speech is bright, the tone exuberant. Dunlop wishes to make it evident that the characters are not congenitally gloomy but rather life-and-fun-loving people caught in a social environment fatal to their basically healthy impulses. Everyone speaks loudly, too loudly (this may also be due to a general uneasiness about the perhaps faulty acoustics of the theatre auditorium), and they laugh a lot. On the whole, Dunlop avoids the farcical.

His treatment eschews dark introspection and thus loses something of the relaxation and much of the shadowiness of a backwoods Russian town where the play takes place, and from which the characters' irrepressible yearning for a fullness of experience mounts like a mist to imbue the atmosphere with lyric beauty. Still, Chekhov is not traduced; the play remains moving, because many of the details are understood and well projected.

The players, none bad or altogether "wrong," are uneven. Crudities occur from time to time, partly because in his effort to establish a permanent company with only a limited number of actors at his disposal, Dunlop has had to choose players not entirely suitable as to "type."

Nevertheless, all the actors have their "moments." Denholm Elliott is especially good in the painful embarrassment and ache of his farewell to Masha. Rosemary Harris's Olga is particularly right in her reproach to and defeat by the aggressive Natalia, as well as in her brave acceptance of the cloudy future. Holly Villaire rather overdoes Natalia, who should not be made a ludicrous vixen as she is here, though she is shown as properly strong when she asserts her dominance over Olga. Barnard Hughes's Doctor is touching in scenes of affection and sorrow, but his cynicism is abrasive and brash rather than the consequence of hopeless bewilderment in a crushed being.

Compliments might also be addressed to Stephen Collins's Andrey and to Ralph Clanton's Ferapont. (It might be remarked, however, that Russian octogenarian servants are much more feeble than they are made out to be in this production.) René Auberjonois's Solyony is effective, though he has been directed to a characterization halfway between burlesque and menacing melodrama. The essence of Solyony's person is hurt: he is shy, lonely, feels himself misunderstood, and is horribly jealous. He hides himself in a mask of abusiveness. Auberjonois, like almost everyone in the cast, would do well if he were permitted to heed Stanislavsky's instruction, "Cut 90 percent!"

The most sustained and winning performances are those of Austin Pendleton as Tusenbach, which is pitched to the nice ease and sweetness of the role, and Tovah Feldshuh, whose aspiring and lovely Irina is shaped to a most believable veracity of expression.

Certain jarring notes in the production may have arisen from a mistrust of the audience. Vershinin and Masha touch each other with an amatory intent contrary to the special reticence that is perhaps the outstanding feature common to the Chekhovian gentlefolk. We know that these married people love each other without needing to have the point made in overt "business." Rex Robbins, because he is himself a large

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man with a powerful bass voice, should have been required to subdue his playing of Kulygin so we could see that, while the man is certainly something of a fool, he is not an oaf. Kulygin is one of Chekhov's *pure* fools, a soul of kindness with a comprehension deeper than intelligence. Such men and women appear in several other plays and in the stories; they have Chekhov's blessing. There is also some "smartening" of the dialogue in Stark Young's (and other translations). Masha is supposed to offer, "Here's to life. What the hell," as a toast. She means she salutes life despite its difficulties. In the Dunlop production Ellen Burstyn as Masha says, "Here's to life. To hell with it!" which means something quite different. The audience laughs and applauds!

An ending is attached to the play in which Kulygin comes out after the gloriously soul-stirring coda when Olga, speaking also for her two sisters, says: "If we could only know, if we could only know!" (why they suffer). He plays the clown to make them cheer up, a scene both clever and damaging. It is the key to the merit and defect of the production. □

INDIGENOUS MUSIC / Nat Hentoff

There is no sound in jazz more exhilarating than a big band in shouting, swinging flight. From the 1920s to the 1940s, large jazz orchestras excited the populace all over the land. Some were territory bands, limited to a particular region. Others were national—composed of nearly permanent gypsies who were on the road for 300 or more nights a year. Teen-aged musicians gaped at their huge buses, fantasizing the time when they too would be called to this joyous itinerant vocation. Sure, it was tiring, but you got to see all kinds of different places; and at most of those places there were band chicks, lissome young women who looked up at you as though you were a wandering star, even if you played third trumpet.

In the 1970s, big bands are not extinct, but they are rare. One reason has been changing popular tastes. For a long time, for instance, many colleges which used to hire a big jazz band have instead chosen an electrified rock combo. And then there's the cost these years of maintaining a sizable jazz caravan. Dizzy Gillespie, a natural big band leader who loves that crackling, shaking wall of sound behind him, has not fielded a large group for years. "I've thought about it," he says, "but my wife won't let me. She's right. We can't afford it."

Yet one big band leader, Woody Herman, has somehow remained solvent, barely, for forty years. And at 64, he is shepherding yet another ensemble of young, spirited sidemen around the country. Woody has commanded a big band since 1936, and through the decades, his ensembles have vigorously reflected most of the changes in the language and directions of jazz. Way back, there was "The Band That Plays the Blues"; and later, another Herd (as he calls his groups), that bristlingly and heatedly explored the manifold possibilities of big band bop (early modern jazz). The current Herman Herd occasionally transmutes rock into jazz but is essentially a hard-swinging crisply modern jazz band which, as is always the case with Herman, includes a number of riveting, largely unknown young soloists recruited by him from various music schools and on the recommendation of hordes of Herman alumni throughout the country.

A slight, rather diffident man, always looking as if he urgently needs a good night's sleep, Woody, once on a bandstand, is at least as enthusiastic as his employees. It is almost impossible to conceive of Herman retiring; he needs the nightly flare and beat of a big band almost as greatly as he needs more palpable sustenance. He still plays clarinet and other reed instruments with competence but no brilliance. Woody, however, doesn't have to excel as an instrumentalist, because his orchestras have always been his primary instrument and he is an exceptional leader, earning the respect and indeed the affection of his men because he is so obviously devoted to their common passion.

Last November, at Carnegie Hall, a concert was held to mark Woody Herman's fortieth anniversary as a leader. In addition to his current Herd, present were such still robustly swinging alumni as Zoot Sims, Stan Getz, Jimmy Rowles and Nat Pierce. Much of that celebration has been preserved in a two-volume RCA Victor set, *Woody Herman/The New Thundering Herd/The 40th Anniversary Concert Recorded Live.* The music, by and large, distills the Herman big band credo. While the styles of the soloists in this reunion differ by generation as well as by temperament, the fundamental Herman requirements are manifest. Swing, to begin with. Collectively and individually. A lean, swinging propulsion on top of which are built clean-edged, incisive ensemble patterns, out of which, in turn, arise concise, strongly disciplined, emotionally forceful solos. And as a witness to Woody's continuing ability to find distinctive young improvisers, there is the extraordinarily resourceful and imaginative playing of current band member Jim Pugh on trombone.

Of the few newer big bands trying to stay alive, the best in years is co-led by pianist Toshiko Akiyoshi and her husband, saxophonist-flutist Lew Tabackin. Most of the scores are by Toshiko, who came to the United States in 1956, and has returned, from time to time, to her native Japan. Her writing, like her piano work, is melodically strong and attractive, occasionally fusing elements of Japanese traditional music with jazz. Whatever the band as a whole plays is executed with exceptional brio, and the soloists, most of them young, improvise with both authority and imaginative power. For a characteristic concert by this Toshiko-Tabackin band, there is the new *Road Time*, a two-volume set on RCA Victor, recorded in Japan in the winter of 1976. Clearly, big bands still live, however hazardous the economics of this glorious phenomenon. □

TWO YEARS AFTER THE WAR

The dead come back home, unfolding their scarlet ponchos.
Mist drifts over the thruway approaches.
At dawn the lilies open, the buds
in death-water.
Space between jaws slowly widens,
tongues climb into the sky trailing fire,
arms unfold from the ground like carpenters' rulers.
The African drums roll all night for the Lords of Salt,
and the women with their heads down on motel tables.

Robert Bly

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DANCE / Nancy Goldner

Playing Prince Ivan in American Ballet Theatre's revival of *The Firebird*, Erik Bruhn adopts a flat-footed, swaggering walk as he first stalks the Firebird and then the enchanted Princess. Bruhn's decision to emphasize the peasant in the Prince, on the rather quaint assumption that within every Russian, even a junior czar, must dwell a *moujik*, is difficult to reconcile with *The Firebird*'s plot. It is hard to imagine this particular Prince releasing the Firebird out of compassion, courting a Princess successfully, and winding up at his own very splendid coronation, carrying a scepter instead of a bow. Odd though Bruhn's interpretation was, however, he was the only person to endow the ballet with an idea, which is to say, himself.

Created in 1910 by Igor Stravinsky and Michel Fokine for the Diaghilev ballet's second season in Paris, *The Firebird* is not exactly a holy relic but it does carry with it enough associations to encumber it with significance. It also has enough merit to warrant a revival. It made Stravinsky practically a household name. It convinced the public that Russians had a special kind of soul up their sleeves; at the very least, a native folklore worth theatrical presentation. It reaffirmed the validity of spectacle for its own sake and perpetuated Diaghilev's wizardly reputation for décor. (For this first production he commissioned Alexander Golovine. Rather than scrap the ballet when those sets were ruined, he commissioned from Natalia Goncharova new décor in 1926. By consensus, Golovine's lost sets are the superior. To my eyes, however, the Goncharova designs, which are used by American Ballet Theatre and Britain's Royal Ballet, uphold the Diaghilev tradition.) Finally, the title role was a wonderful vehicle for Tamara Karasavina in 1910 and for Margot Fonteyn in the 1950s. In reviving this ballet, American Ballet Theatre may rest assured that its self-conception as America's fanciest museum of dance is properly fed. The production also continues ABT's tradition of making a very loud plunge into sacred territory and then running scared, as much a *moujik* as Bruhn's Ivan.

Neither ABT management nor Christopher Newton, the British choreographer brought in to teach the steps, seems to have convinced the ballerina for whom *The Firebird* was revived that the bird is a terrific role. Natalia Makarova's febrile temperament, sharp jump and extraordinarily sensitive arms promise a sensational bird of fire. Even her flaws might have been transformed into gold by Fokine. Her tendency to let her imagination run riot in choreography too familiar and too easy might have found a perfect foil in Fokine's rudimentary, though not easy, dances for the Firebird. For one who of late likes to control not only the stage but the conductor's choice of tempo, what better opportunity is there than the monster scene, in which the bird singlehandedly manipulates the hordes, first into frenzy, then into slumber? For one who has publicly avowed the special status of ballerinadom, what better part is there than a supernatural, suprahuman creature possessed of that very quality? The force of her jumps at half-mast, on fire in her arms but not in her back—or brain—uncomfortably dancing with a golden apple thrust into her mouth (perhaps because of its savage imagery) and somewhat amused by the swirling monsters and hobgoblin Kostchei—in all this Makarova was the embodiment of the reluctant king (of the forest).

The monster scene is in fact the one serious flaw in Fokine's choreography. For one legion of grotesques to cabriole down the center of the stage in neat formation while the second legion patiently awaits its turn is hopelessly tame within the context of Stravinsky's miraculous *danse infernale*. As the standard-bearer of reaction (revolution?) against Petipa's conventions, Fokine had in this scene a fine opportunity to put theory into practice; the kindest explanation for his failure to do so is to regard the scene as a satire on Petipa. Had ABT produced the ballet in good faith, however, the dancers might have been instructed to help Fokine by jumping

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about with a little more vigor. Would it have been unfaithful of the company to have quickened the entrances of Kostchei's retinue, or to have eliminated the bit where the front line of monsters sit on the floor, "kicking their legs," as Stravinsky described it, "in an incredibly stupid manner"? It strikes me that ABT's fidelity grows more out of insecurity than of love; that Bruhn's "mistake" was the one sign of life in this somnambulant revival.

Given the company's pride in the pictorial elaborateness and accuracy of its revivals, it is odd that it should have obscured two of the three Goncharova backdrops by dim lighting. One could barely see the forest, or the starry night, or the beautifully latticed gate that encloses Ivan in Kostchei's den. The coronation scene is a daring attempt to let music and décor carry the finale. Goncharova takes us from the forest's depths to a panoramic cityscape resplendent in reds, pinks and blues. The celebrants who populate this city extend the architecture into the foreground, creating an illusion of Byzantine mosaic. Only the city's cupolas are set off, in gold. The vista is both cozy and majestic, and when staged with enough people and at the right pace, as the Royal Ballet has done, it makes dancing absolutely superfluous. ABT's coronation retains the dark blue paisley-like side curtains from the first scene, which in this production serve only to diminish the impact of the skyline at the back of the stage. The entrances of the celebrants are sluggish. The officials who don the royal couple in red and ermine robes fail to make a fanfare of it. The Princess stands like a bridesmaid. The sudden increase in wattage during the last bars of music has all the power of a functionary's tardy arrival. When a coronation is doled out in pints, it is all too easy for the audience to mistake lack of conviction for lack of event, and so condemn it for being old-fashioned. The monster scene *is* old-fashioned and so, relatively speaking, are the duets and solos Fokine devised for the Firebird; one need only compare them to the Balanchine version of 1949. In most other ways, however, Fokine's flaw is to stimulate the modern audience's prejudices against, on the one hand, the kind of leisurely, modest texture that marks the maidens' round dance and courtship of the Princess and Ivan, and on the other hand, the unabashed lusciousness of the coronation. Dresses in hot pink and purple now adorn every clothes rack, but strawberry and cranberry are still sinful. American Ballet Theatre's *Firebird* does not unburden us of that fear.

Douglas Dunn is one of the more recent of Merce Cunningham progeny to have set up his own shop. He has choreographed some forceful solos for himself—one of them called, coincidentally, *Gestures in Red*—and for the last year or so has been developing a group dance called *Lazy Madge*, which he terms an "ongoing choreographic project." The piece seems to be in a permanent state of evolution and, through Dunn's imagination, enjoys a constant source of fresh ideas. The particular charm of Dunn's work is that it mixes a post-Cunningham interest in quasi-everyday movement with the rigorously technical, highly theatrical real-dance of Cunningham. Dance as a low-keyed high-wire act might be a good way to characterize *Lazy Madge*. In its latest presentation, in early May at the black and gold art deco Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Diplomat, *Lazy Madge* began with a woman softly pressing into the balls of her feet, gently shifting her weight from one leg to the other while four men, behind her, froze in mid-stride. The woman seemed to be testing her muscles for suppleness, trying out the movement for size. Later on, agility, strength and stamina come into play for all nine dancers, but it is the testing of these qualities, rather than their presentation as a *fait accompli*, that makes *Lazy Madge* both exciting and amusing.

We are always aware of kinetic transition and of those moments when a phrase reaches a threshold. The self-consciousness of this inside-out kind of choreography and performance accounts for the excitement. The fun of it lies in all the ornamental detail Dunn piles on. For example, while one couple is engineering a hazardous lift, a third dancer, standing in almost-repose on the other side of the stage, is flexing his index finger, while a fourth is inching toward him in an elaborate sequence of turned-out and parallel foot positions, while a fifth is lying prone, except that one leg is held an inch off the floor and one hand is cupped around an invisible object, while the sixth. . . . No joint or cranny of the body lies fallow. On the other hand, few phrases are pursued to resolution. There is a restlessness in *Lazy Madge*, perhaps born out of what often seems to be an improvisational search for the gesture, the configuration just out of reach. Sometimes I thought that the dance was about a search for the best place and the best position in which to bed down for the night. Not that the floor plays a big role in *Lazy Madge* but that the persistence, thoroughness and persnickety way that Dunn investigates movement embody the passion of the insomniac. □

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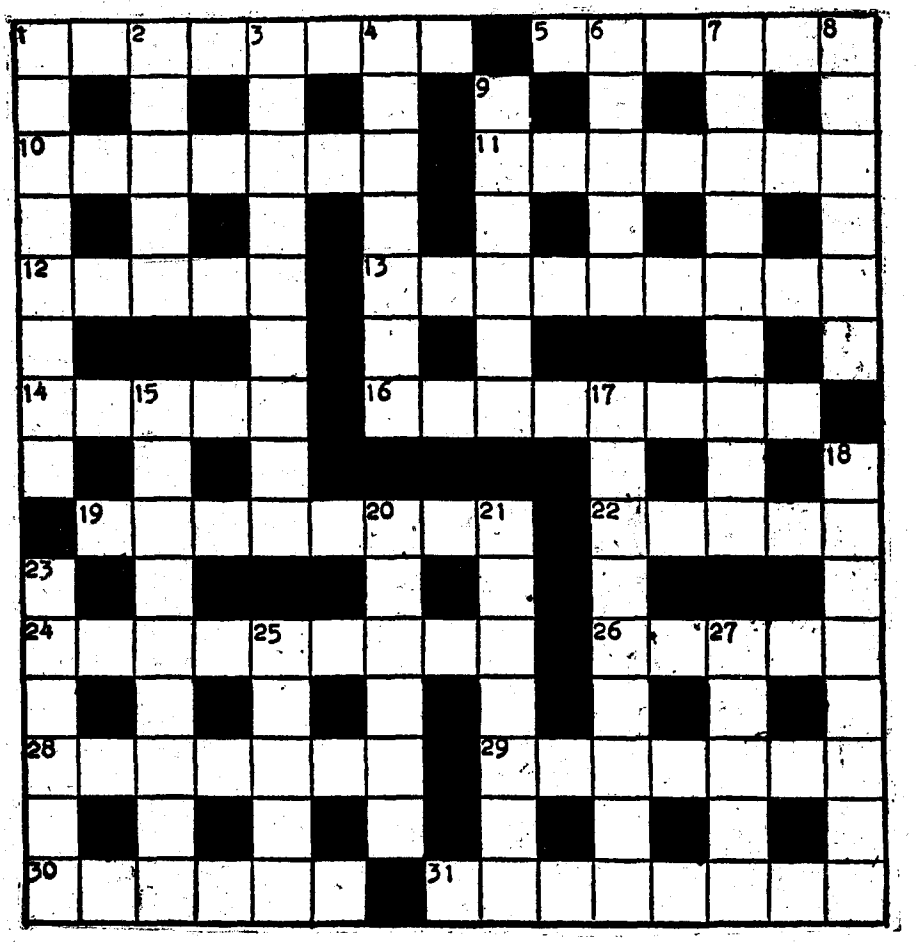

ACROSS

1 Ducks what one might do on donkeys. (8)
5 and 18 down Look-alike film developed ready for printing—not unsatisfactory, perhaps. (6,8)
10 It might help in making an egg flip. (7)
11 They might be expected to control the squares or perhaps just visitors. (7)
12 A lot of real estate propaganda contained in it? (5)
13 For example, the nape of a boa. . . . (9)
14 . . . or another snake. (5)
16 They're not necessarily bound to show you the way. (8)
19 What de Kruif's hunters were after. (8)
22 Perhaps never makes what the bold are supposed to have. (5)
24 Possibly farm animals with a garden implement, or what the former expect underfoot. (9)
26 Many people have to face it every day. (5)
28 Something 30 might be. (7)
29 Is a mixed gin able to prove a tongue-twister? (7)
30 Is part of the idea singularly lessening the pain? (6)
31 Do, and you might get one foot on each side. (8)

DOWN

1 and 23 down A very definite expense, its motion being current. (8,6)
2 In short, a state, like a lake. (5)
3 A grown-up person shows hesitation more than once, being a sinner. (9)
4 Right in the middle of what 24 may be, if not a ringer, one finds out. (7)
6 Deck, otherwise chop off. (5)
7 He probably has hives. (9)
8 One might expect a person from Maine to be down this season. (6)
9 Two kinds of current to one with a tree. (6)
15 Promisers of spring? (9)
17 One's madness should be fixed with it. (9)
18 See 5 across
20 Saw what some cuddlesome girls would like to. (6)
21 When it comes to dessert, her best is none too good. (7)
23 See 1 down
25 The Spanish-French ending should be spritely. (5)
27 This vegetable sounds burnt. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1679

ACROSS: 1 Spine; 4 Chafed; 11 Chianti; 12 and 14 Sense of humor; 13 Refresher; 15 Pressure point; 17 Winning streak; 22 Steal; 24 Table talk; 25 Actinic; 26 Riveter; 27 and 28 Stands aside. DOWN: 2 Paid for; 3 Non-person; 5 Hunch; 6 Freeman; 7 Defers; 8 Score; 9 Without notice; 10 As free as a bird; 16 Ourselves; 18 Inertia; 19 Adapted; 20 Asians; 21 Skirt; 23 Lined.

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